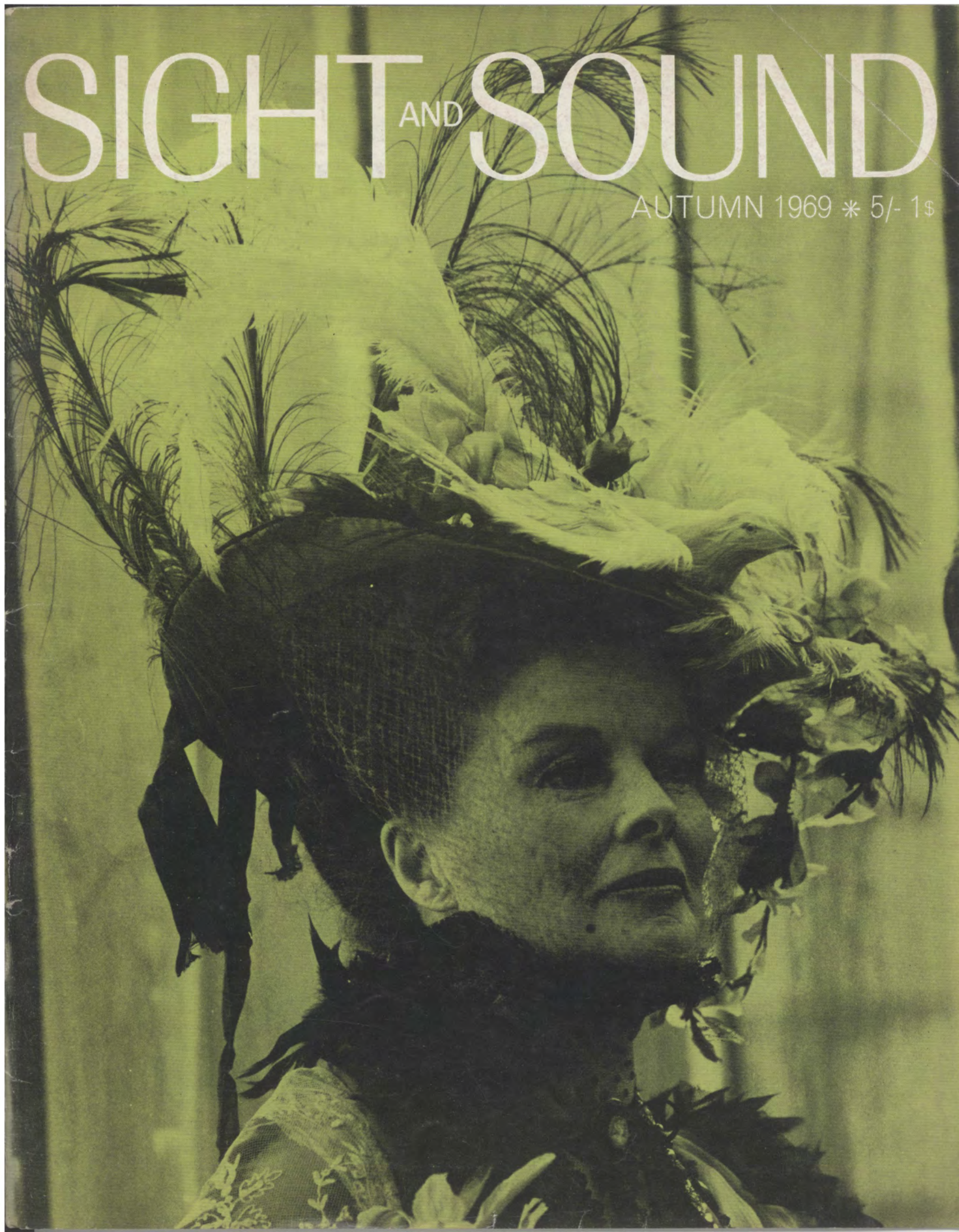


# SIGHT AND SOUND

AUTUMN 1969 \* 5/- 1\$





## Two Films by **DUSAN MAKAVEJEV**

### **THE SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR**

68 mins      Subtitled      Black & white

With: Eva Ras, Ruzica Sokic,  
Slobodan Aligrudic

The completely uncut version of this extraordinary example of contemporary Yugoslav cinema. The love-story of a pretty young telephone operator and a Stakhanovite rodent exterminator is intercut with fascinating digressions on sex, religion and crime and on the rivalry of man and rat for the mastery of the world. A brilliant film if not, perhaps, for the unduly squeamish.

Cannes Festival: (Critics' week)  
New York Festival 1967  
Montreal Festival 1967  
London Festival 1967  
Pula Festival 1967

### **INNOCENCE UNPROTECTED**

78 mins      Subtitled      Part colour

In 1942 in occupied Belgrade the first Serbian feature was privately produced by Aleksic, Yugoslavia's greatest strong man and acrobat. He played himself, protecting an orphan heroine from a fate worse than death. The whole film was made under the noses of the Germans, who later confiscated it.

Makavejev has unearthed the film and tracked down the producer-writer director-star. **Innocence Unprotected** brilliantly intertwines the old film with newsreel footage and Makavejev's own colour material of everyone who took part as they are today. Now it is not only orphan Nada but Yugoslavia itself which is saved from rape.

Silver Arena—Pula Festival  
Silver Bear—Berlin Festival  
Fipresci Prize—Berlin Festival

AVAILABLE FROM:

hunter films limited, 182 wardour street, london W1V 4BH tel: 01-734 8527/8 3978/9

## **The Celluloid Muse:** *Hollywood Directors Speak*

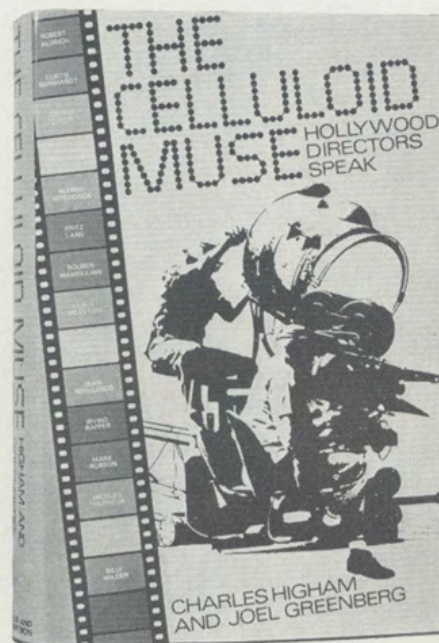
By CHARLES HIGHAM and JOEL GREENBERG

Taped autobiographies, some from "Sight and Sound", by fifteen of the directors who made the American cinema great.

Robert Aldrich	Lewis Milestone
Curtis Bernhardt	Vincente Minnelli
George Cukor	Jean Negulesco
John Frankenheimer	Irving Rapper
Alfred Hitchcock	Mark Robson
Fritz Lang	Jacques Tourneur
Rouben Mamoulian	King Vidor
	Billy Wilder

*With an introduction, filmographies, and many photographs. To be published in November. 50s.*

**ANGUS AND ROBERTSON**





# Your chance to show the 'big name' films from the 'big two'.



A selection of films available to 16mm users:

**Blue Max**

**Cleopatra**

**The Bible**

**The Charge of the Light Brigade**

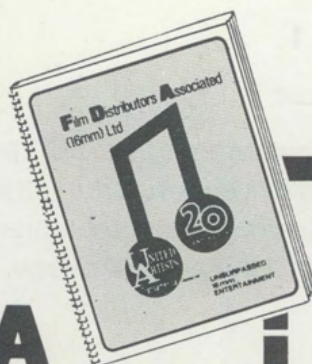
**The Graduate**

**Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines**

**Tom Jones**

**You Only Live Twice**

**Send for FREE Catalogue**



**FDA**

**Film Distributors Associated  
(16mm) Ltd,  
37/41 Mortimer St, London W1A 2JL  
Telephone: 636 7141**

To: Film Distributors Associated (16mm) Ltd,  
37/41 Mortimer St, London W1A 2JL

Please send me a **FREE CATALOGUE** of the 16mm films  
available through F.D.A.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



*Lillian Gish (with Ann Pinchot)*



## The Movies, Mr. Griffith, and Me

More than the autobiography of one of the greatest stars of all time, this is also a history of the motion-picture industry.

'An enchanting biography'—NOEL COWARD

'She writes with the modesty of a great artist'—SIR JOHN GIELGUD

400 pages 79 photographs 50s

*W. H. ALLEN*

No. 1 in a series of CINEMA CLASSICS

D. W. Griffith's  
**THE RISE AND FALL OF  
FREE SPEECH IN AMERICA**

\$2.95

Published by

**LARRY EDMUNDS BOOKSHOP**

**6658 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. 90028**

World's largest collection of books and related material on motion pictures. New catalog in preparation. Please send us your 'wants'.



*Come in and see us for  
complete line of British and  
American film magazines*

**New Spring "Currents" free on request**

**ASK FOR NEW FILM FILE No. 6**

*Always in the market to buy film books & magazines*

**GOTHAM BOOK MART**

**41 W. 47, New York 10036**

## UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

### Department of Extra-Mural Studies

*by arrangement with the Slade Film Department, University College  
offers a two-year part-time course in*

# Cinema in Perspective

**at University College, Gower Street, W.C.1**

**commencing 6th October, 1969**

This course consists of 3 screenings a week commencing at 5.00 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays during term time, followed on Thursdays by a seminar specifically held for part-time adult students. Places are strictly limited and intending students have to enrol as part-time members of University College. The fee for the screenings and seminars is £10 per term.

Application forms can be obtained from:

**THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (EXTENSION)**

**Department of Extra-Mural Studies**

**University of London, 7 Ridgmount Street, W.C.1**



## From America's Leading Specialist in Cinema—TV

**"Cinema 5" New Catalogue \$1.00.**

(1000 Books, magazines, posters and other memorabilia in many languages)

**Magazine CTVD, \$3 yearly US, \$4 all elsewhere**

(A quarterly review in English of the serious foreign-language Cinema—TV Press)

**Dept. SS, HAMPTON BOOKS,  
DRWR H, HAMPTON BAYS, NY 11946, USA.**

## FILM SLIDES

**FOR LECTURERS AND STUDENTS OF FILM**

in boxes of 120 taken from the frame on the work of major directors, produced in Paris by *L'Avant-Scène* in gilt-lettered book-like containers 'loaded' in racks for easy automatic projection, with brochures giving captions in English for each slide plus complete credits, synopses and commentary on each film.

The first sets are available now at 10 gns. (\$26) each  
(incl. registered post):

**JEAN RENOIR** (films 1924-1939)  
**S. M. EISENSTEIN** (complete works)  
(Welles, Godard, Buñuel forthcoming)  
from **THE TANTIVY PRESS**  
108 NEW BOND ST., LONDON W1Y 0QX  
(agents for *L'Avant-Scène* magazine)

### RELIGION IN THE CINEMA

by Ivan Butler. A comprehensive survey of Biblical themes in the commercial cinema. 'Lightly written but thoroughly researched; altogether a wittier and more readable bit of film documentation than the title would suggest.'—*Films and Filming*.

15s

### CINEMA OF FRITZ LANG

by Paul M. Jensen. A fascinating study of every film made by Lang from the early key works of his German period to the series of thrillers and westerns shot subsequently in Hollywood.

September 15s

### HITCHCOCK'S FILMS

by Robin Wood. A reprint of the original book in the series with a penetrating new chapter on 'Torn Curtain', many new photographs and a much elaborated filmography. September 12s 6d

### THE MARX BROTHERS

by Allan Eyles. A reprint of the original book with a new cover design and a few small revisions.

September 12s 6d

A. Zwemmer Ltd.

78 Charing Cross Road, W.C.2

## CONTEMPORARY FILMS

present

## MEMORIES



### ... OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

The first Cuban feature film to be released in this country is as amusing as it is thought-provoking. *MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT* is the story of a well educated, prosperous young Cuban who is trying to find a place for himself in a new society and also is just trying to find himself. ... One of the outstanding films of 1969, it has won unanimous praise for its director, Tomas Gutierrez Alea.



### ... OF ZBIGNIEW CYBULSKI

Although his name is never mentioned, the great Polish star of 'Ashes and Diamonds' who was killed at the age of 40 is the central figure of Andrzej Wajda's haunting and brilliant film *EVERYTHING FOR SALE*. As Colin McArthur wrote in *Sight and Sound*, the film 'exemplifies the eternal mystery of artistic creation. Out of a devastating personal tragedy, Wajda has wrought a masterpiece.'



### ... OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE RUSSIAN CINEMA

For many years the Russian silent classics of the 'twenties have been seen only as shadowy reflections of their original greatness. Now, with brand new prints taken from original negative materials, the work of some of the cinema's greatest directors can be fully appreciated.

Eisenstein's *OCTOBER*, Pudovkin's *MOTHER* and *THE END OF ST. PETERSBURG*, and Dovzhenko's *EARTH* are now available exclusively from Contemporary.

New Catalogue Supplement Now Available, Price 5/-

## CONTEMPORARY FILMS

**55 GREEK STREET, LONDON W.1**

Telephone (01) 734 4901 (six lines)



# THE LONDON FILM SCHOOL

## FORMERLY LONDON SCHOOL OF FILM TECHNIQUE

INDEPENDENT • NON-PROFIT • AN "EDUCATIONAL CHARITY"  
REGISTERED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Staff, visiting lecturers, tutors and Board of Governors are drawn from all sides of the film and television industry. Our courses concentrate on the art of film-making but we are situated in central London, within easy reach of Picture Galleries, Museums, Theatres, Concert Halls, etc., as well as Cinemas. Students are therefore—quite literally—in a good position to broaden their knowledge of the other arts.

### DIPLOMA COURSE

Very intensive, very professional, this packs into two years a full education in the arts and techniques of film-making.

We discourage narrow specialization, insist that all students learn as much as possible about all aspects of the medium—but demand a high technical and creative standard for each individual job undertaken.

Together with lectures, discussions and "practicals"—many of which are concentrated into the first term—students must work on a minimum of six films throughout the course.

These films are made in groups (averaging six students) and are based on students' own original work, with advice from experienced film-makers and under the supervision of professional "Course Directors" who are dedicated enough to spend a term or two at the school (e.g., recently—Sidney Cole, Clive Donner, Robert Dunbar, Charles Frend, Alexander Mackendrick, Wolf Rilla, Michael Segal, Andrew Szepesy, etc.).

The choice of subject and of jobs is largely democratic. At least 3 films must be in 16 mm., at least 2 in 35 mm. and at least 2 in colour.

Discipline is also democratic—but the common interest demands a high degree of punctuality and regularity of attendance. Scriptwriting, shooting and editing often require much more time than the official school hours.

### DATES

COURSE 52	...	...	...	...	13th January 1970
COURSE 53	...	...	...	...	28th April 1970
COURSE 54	...	...	...	...	29th September 1970
COURSE 55	...	...	...	...	11th January 1971
COURSE 56	...	...	...	...	29th April 1971

Note: A complete self-contained course commences three times every year. Each term lasts twelve weeks.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Scholarships or grants previously awarded by any educational authority, government or Foundation do not necessarily guarantee acceptance by the school. Students must be able to understand and communicate in English at an advanced level. Students must be prepared to work hard in an environment that is more a workshop than an academy.

Although there is no official minimum age, no candidate is enrolled immediately on completion of his secondary education. Candidates are invited to apply at this time for an interview, in order that their potentialities may be assessed. If considered suitable they will be given provisional acceptance for a later course, but will be expected to work or travel for a year or so before actually joining the school.

Candidates who are already graduates of Universities or colleges may be accepted without this requirement.

#### For Residents of the United Kingdom

Minimum educational requirements are a university degree, five passes at "O" Level and two at "A" Level G.C.E., or diplomas from art or technical schools; experience of film-making may be accepted in some cases. Applicants will be asked to submit work and must in all cases attend for at least one interview at this school: they may also be interviewed by their local education authorities.

#### For Overseas Residents

##### (a) DIPLOMA COURSE

Applicants from abroad must be university graduates and will be asked to submit work. Experience in film-making will also be taken into account. All fees must be paid in advance.

##### (b) OVERSEAS FILM TRAINING SCHOOL BASIC COURSE

This course provides intensive tuition in the theoretical and practical aspects of film production, especially for the emergent countries. Special courses are tailored for individual needs. Students are usually sponsored by their own governments or by international arrangement through British government departments.

### ANIMATION SCHOOL

A one-year course in animation will be available either as a 3rd year or, in certain cases, as a 2nd year, for students of our Diploma Course.

Further details from The Registrar,  
The London Film School  
24 Shelton Street, London, W.C.2



# Panther

Published 27 November Granada Publishing

## Hitchcock by François Truffaut

With over 450 illustrations. 30/-

Now in paperback —  
this classic of cinema literature.





**ROBERT HARDY says:**  
Like many, I imagine, I know that I owe what success I have achieved very much to Bertie Scott and his teaching and his encouragement. When I act well it is because I do what he taught me to do. When I do not act well, it is because I forget or fail in what he taught me to do.

**MARIE NEY says:**  
Sir Tyrone Guthrie, who sent me to Bertie Scott, told him I could splash my voice out of the back of the theatre and scream hysterics, but I could not make 'throw-away' lines sound simple and thrown away! Bertie knew at once where I was wrong: we could begin to get it right.

**MICHEL SAINT-DENIS says:**  
I have watched the teaching itself and read the book. Both have the same quality: one feels the man and his passion for the work he did.

**THE LIFE OF ACTING**  
by Bertie Scott  
in the **NEW POCKET EDITION** 18/- or U.S. \$2.75.  
inc. sea-mail, etc., from  
Margaret McCluen,  
188, Goldhurst Terrace,  
London, N.W.6.

## JOHN FORD

from

## Warner-Pathe

The Grapes of Wrath • Young Mr. Lincoln • Tobacco Road • Steamboat Round the Bend • Prisoner of Shark Island • Sergeant Rutledge • The Searchers • Rising of the Moon

**Our new 16mm Supplement  
is available now!**

*Warner-Pathe Distributors Ltd.,*  
135 Wardour Street, London, W.1  
*Telephone: 01-437 5600*

**YOU'LL FIND ALL THE ACTION**

*in the*

## British Film Institute's DISTRIBUTION LIBRARY

*Latest releases include:*

**HEROSTRATUS** (Levy)  
**MARY OF SCOTLAND** (Ford)  
**AGE OF DAYDREAMING** (Szabo)  
**MURDER** (Hitchcock)  
**HEART OF TEXAS RYAN** (Tom Mix)  
**BLACK 5** (Barnes)  
**SAN FRANCISCO** (Stern)  
**JOURNEY INTO AUTUMN** (Bergman)

*Catalogue: 10/- post free from*

BFI Publications Department,  
81 Dean Street, London W.1.





# THE EMERGENCE OF FILM ART

by  
**LEWIS JACOBS**

**The evolution and development of the motion picture as an art, from 1900 to the present.**

"For anyone concerned with film it is not enough to read this book, it is necessary to own it."

—GARSON KANIN

"Here is another of Lew Jacobs' catholic and comprehending compendia of stimulating and informative writing about films. It should find its way to all the cinema library shelves."

—BOSLEY CROWTHER

"Jacobs' new anthology is distinguished by the same qualities of clear organization and selective discrimination that have made his previous *Introduction to the Art of the Movies* an invaluable source of information. Covering the whole spectrum of cinema, he succeeds again in condensing a great amount of substantial material into an easily manageable format."

—GEORGE AMBERG

Director of the Graduate Cinema Program at  
New York University

**Paperback \$ 3.95      Hardcover \$ 8.95**  
**453 pages      Many illustrations**

**HOPKINSON AND BLAKE, PUBLISHERS**  
**7 East 35th Street, New York, N.Y., USA**

## Philip French The Movie Moguls

### An Informal History of the Hollywood Tycoons

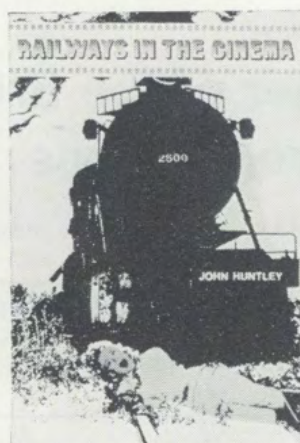
'One of the best filmbooks of the year.'  
*Sheridan Morley, Films and Filming.*

'Mr French has taken on a big, fascinating theme, if not several themes, and he has exactly the gifts—a delight in the telling anecdote, a capacity to read widely and retain the gist, a dry style tending to wit—for doing it full justice.' *John Coleman, New Statesman.*

'The best kind of outsider's Michelin Guide . . . brilliant little book.' *Bryan Forbes, Times.*

Illustrated 42s

**Weidenfeld & Nicolson**  
**5 Winsley Street London W1**



## RAILWAYS IN THE CINEMA

by  
**JOHN  
HUNTLEY**

John Huntley fully explores the varied and fascinating ways railways have been used by film makers. His comprehensive, well-illustrated book grew out of a 1965 National Film Theatre series and includes travelogues, newsreels, documentaries and feature films in sections devoted to the silent, the sound, the short and the TV film. There is an extensive index.

9" x 6" 240pp (including 64pp illustrations) 45/-

**IAN ALLAN**

**TERMINAL HOUSE  
SHEPPERTON  
MIDDLESEX**



# Revolution in the Cinema

National Film Theatre Sept. 19 - Dec. 10  
1969



calman

Become a member of the British Film Institute  
and see these programmes:

**REVOLUTION IN THE CINEMA**—Film classics, new and old, with revolutionary themes and techniques, including *October*, *Mother*, *Cuba Si!* and *Duck Soup*.

**SAMUEL FULLER**—All of the films by the American master of emotional violence including *Shock Corridor* and *The Naked Kiss*.

**HAL WALLIS**—A tribute to the American producer whose notable films include such classics as *Little Caesar*, *Sergeant York* and *Gold Diggers of 1933*.

**HUMPHREY JENNINGS**—The complete work of Britain's poet of the documentary cinema.

**NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA**—Retrospective of fifty short films made by the Film Board since its creation in 1939 including many new films.

**SILENT FILM COMEDY**—The BBC at the NFT with a programme of comedy classics introduced by Michael Bentine.

**TWELVE YEARS OF THE LONDON FILM FESTIVAL**—A film from each year of the festival since its inception.

**NEW WORK FROM BRITAIN**—Five programmes of new films by young filmmakers including the latest work from the British Film Institute Production Board.

**FRIDAY NIGHT IS HITCHCOCK NIGHT**—Eight more films from Britain's best known director including *Rear Window* and *Vertigo*.

For fully illustrated programme sent free on request, write to:

THE MEMBERSHIP OFFICER, THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,

81 Dean Street, London, W.1. Tel: 01-437-4355.



# SIGHT<sup>AND</sup> SOUND

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

## Contents Autumn 1969

VOLUME 38 NO 4

---

### Features

- 176 Festivals 69 : Berlin, Edinburgh, Moscow, Venice
  - 181 In the Picture
  - 188 Days and Nights in the Forest
  - 218 Correspondence
  - 220 Film Guide
- 

### Articles

- 166 The Theatre of Walerian Borowczyk: PHILIP STRICK
  - 172 Talking with Peckinpah: RICHARD WHITEHALL
  - 184 The Lily in the Valley, an interview with  
Delphine Seyrig: RUI NOGUEIRA
  - 190 Lumet in '69: STEPHEN FARBER
  - 196 Solidarity and Violence: ANDI ENGEL
  - 201 Censorship : On the Way Out. . . ? : NEVILLE HUNNINGS
  - 202 Censorship : A View from New York: ANDREW SARRIS
  - 204 2001 : Out of the Silent Planet: MEL McKEE
- 

### Film Reviews

- 208 The Wild Bunch: TOM MILNE
  - 209 La Femme Infidèle: GAVIN MILLAR
  - 210 Le Gai Savoir: RICHARD ROUD
  - 211 Easy Rider: TOM MILNE
  - 211 Midnight Cowboy: JAN DAWSON
  - 212 Memories of Underdevelopment: DON ALLEN
  - 213 The Ten Thousand Suns: DAVID WILSON
  - 214 Praise Marx and Pass the Ammunition: JAN DAWSON
  - 214 Kes: JACK IBBERTSON
  - 214 Cinderella—Italian Style: JOHN GILLET
  - 215 Justine: PHILIP STRICK
- 

### Book Reviews

- 216 The Movies, Mr. Griffith and Me: BESSIE LOVE
  - 216 The Movie Moguls: GAVIN MILLAR
  - 217 The Celluloid Muse: JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR
- 

Cover: Katharine Hepburn in  
'The Madwoman of Chaillot'

Editor: Penelope Houston Associate: Tom Milne  
Designer: John Harmer Business Manager: John Smoker

SIGHT AND SOUND is an independent critical magazine sponsored and published by the British Film Institute. It is not an organ for the expression of official British Film Institute policy; signed articles represent the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

Copyright © 1969 by The British Film Institute, EDITORIAL, PUBLISHING AND ADVERTISING OFFICES: British Film Institute, 81 Dean Street, London, W.1. (01-437 4355). EDITORIAL BOARD: Penelope Houston, Stanley Reed, Ernest Lindgren, Richard Roud. Entered as 2nd class matter at the Post Office, New York, N.Y. Printed in England. Published and distributed in the U.S.A. by SIGHT AND SOUND. All American subscriptions and advertising enquiries should be directed to Eastern News Distributors Inc., 155 West 15th Street, New York 10011.



THE NAME, like so many Polish words, seems at first glance impenetrable, a barbed-wire thicket of consonants that the unrehearsed tongue can do no more than scramble over and leave hastily behind. One can attempt, with Nabokovian relish, to spell it out (Bō-rov-chick), but a sense of linguistic defeat lingers on; the angular label sits obstinately on the printed page with a punctuation all its own. In France, where he has made films for ten years, they soon gave up and called him, simply, Boro. In England, where most of his works have circulated among film societies for the past twelve years, they seem to have avoided embarrassment by seldom mentioning him at all.

With the arrival of *Goto*, *l'Île d'Amour*, however, it will be necessary to mention Walerian Borowczyk at considerable length. Short films may be easily enough forgotten or ignored, and one can even contrive to overlook an eighty-minute animated feature ('I can do without it,' murmured one of the few critics to mention *Théâtre de Monsieur et Madame Kabal*), but when it comes to live-action full-blooded drama starring Pierre Brasseur and a fair number of tasteful nudes the debate is likely to become both noisy and fashionable. Certainly there can no longer be any doubt that Borowczyk's film language is as aggressive, self-determined and idiosyncratic as that of Bresson or Buñuel, perhaps the only other directors whose visions have a remotely similar focus. Nor, to broaden the argument for a moment, will it again be possible after *Goto* to pigeonhole the animator as capable of nothing more than enduring the tedium of frame-by-frame shooting for the sake of a few special effects.

Borowczyk has moved into 'conventional' filming with, naturally enough, all the ease of someone who has been using celluloid since 1957, and without a sacrifice in theme, characterisation or style. In that the transition is resoundingly more successful (and more consistent) than when it was attempted by Ernest Pintoff, the closest recognisable pioneer, *Goto* triumphantly confirms the hesitant implications of *Harvey Middleman*, *Fireman*, that realism is just a caricature of cinema anyway. After this, nobody need be surprised at broadsides from George Dunning, Richard Williams or, save us, Yoji Kuri. Their fantasies, too, could turn out to be even more human than anyone suspected.

\* \* \*

The fantasies of Borowczyk began in Poland. No official biography points out that his country was invaded when he was sixteen—he is first recorded demurely studying art at the Cracow Academy in 1946 at the age of twenty-three—but too much of the Polish chaos has been analysed and restaged for us to avoid the supposition that the ministries of fear in Borowczyk's films originated with the events of his late adolescence. From such a background would emerge quite plausibly the themes in his work of casual brutality, malignant direction by superior forces, the fragile, elegant past represented by faded snapshots and piecemeal lithographs, and a ritualism in which military and religious paraphernalia are closely intermingled.

Whether or not Borowczyk fought in the Warsaw sewers, watched his parents being executed, or suffered endless humiliations in a concentration camp, it can at least be concluded that his student years were spent with many who did. That he left Poland for good just at the moment when a new spirit of unrestrained anger was sweeping through the Polish cinema further serves to confirm that his portraits of society have a nationalist tint. But of course the perspectives aren't as easily defined as this. Borowczyk's first film, *Once Upon a Time* (1957), a McLaren-style romp using



THE LAST SEQUENCE OF "GOTO": LIGIA BRANICE.

geometric shapes and cut-outs, prefaces later work only in an episode with a persistent fly, the glimpse of an angel, and a conclusion in which the central character asserts its independence of the film-maker by marching off the screen. Also, it was made with Jan Lenica (a poster-artist like Borowczyk), the extent of whose influence—undoubtedly immense—is difficult to determine.

From the images in *Dom*, made the following year in the same partnership, it is similarly possible to deduce no more than a complete fusion of interests; this was the first appearance of Ligia, later to be star of *Rosalie* and *Goto*, while one may guess that the use of a sinister city façade, archetype for *Labyrinth*, was Lenica's contribution. Otherwise one can only note that the overhead flashes are reminiscent of *Jeux des Anges*, the wig sequence of *Renaissance*, and the musical/visual repetition sequence of hints in *Kabal*. The power of *Dom* lies in its creation of an atmosphere of mounting panic: behind her shuttered window a girl listens to the ticking of a





Philip Strick

THE  
THEATRE  
OF **WALERIAN  
BOROWCZYK**



clock, occasionally imagining in the sudden vast stretches of silence between ticks a number of surrealistic incidents. A mechanical brain is constructed by another self-driven machine; two wrestlers, taken from the earliest photographic recordings of movement (which, incidentally, dates them in the period to which Borowczyk's work constantly looks back), jump, flash and fence with each other; a heap of hair, scuffling about with a horrible curiosity, eats a newspaper, chases an orange, consumes a glass of milk, shatters it, and crawls away. Finally the girl caresses a white plaster head, only to see it disintegrate like an eggshell. Outside, the electronic noises of the city have intensified, while the ticking of the girl's clock continues remorselessly.

\* \* \*

This sense of private nightmare haunts all the subsequent, separate films of Lenica and Borowczyk, although it is noticeable that Lenica has gravitated towards Ionesco (with such adaptations as *Rhinoceros* and *A*), where Borowczyk has—with perhaps a nod to Beckett—pursued his own preoccupations even when drawing from Maupassant for *Rosalie*. All the things that are unnerving about *Dom*, its claustrophobic gloom, its suspension of normal time by the use of stop-motion, its intimations of futility, its very alienness, are echoed in Borowczyk's method from then on. With his move to France in 1959, however, he found a new influence—that of Chris Marker, with whom he collaborated on *Les Astronautes*.

It could only have been Marker who added space-travel to Borowczyk's universe, together with a humorous array of quasi-technical equations that recur, sure enough, in the Marker-edited *Brûlure de Mille Soleils*, but are never seen again in Borowczyk's work. More indelibly, it was surely Marker who thought up the owl and who gave the film the cracking pace and slapstick shoulder-shrugging exuberance that was to emerge again in *Joachim's Dictionary* and the lunatic moments of the Kabal show. The owl, a wise, patient, and observant familiar (who quickly recognises that Einstein's theory of time in space is accurate), became the first of a long succession of devoted companions, from dogs to the unclassifiable fauna of the Kabals, who represent a kind of twilight humanity in Borowczyk films. Creatures with wings are a particular obsession, evidently with the dual attraction to Borowczyk of a religious symbol and a defiance of gravity (most of his key scenes take place on some type of elevation). But at the same time he is clearly fascinated by the animal drives in human nature, and with *Rosalie*, *Gavotte*, and *Goto* he is in effect dealing with household pets in human form. Marker and his cats could have found no better ally.

What, most of all, strikes as pure Borowczyk in *Les Astronautes* is the scene in which the bizarre little spaceship hovers briefly in the (Lenica?) city while the inventor gazes through his periscope at a girl (Ligia?) in her bedroom. Staring through binoculars is an activity of crucial importance to *Goto* and of integral significance in *Kabal*. Where it is not overt in the short films (even the dwarf in *Gavotte* submits someone offscreen to a piercing gaze through a spyglass), it takes the form of placing the audience behind the lens—in other words, the action is addressed directly at us (as in *Rosalie* or *Diptych*) or for us (as in *Jeux des Anges*, where we are given a guided tour, *Renaissance*, where we as imagined latecomers are given a synopsis of destruction, and *Kabal*, where be it *Concert* or *Théâtre* the whole concept is one of an entertainment put on for our benefit).

\* \* \*

Voyeurism is an innocent enough pursuit in *Les Astronautes*, but it seems quickly to have assumed a sinister ambiguity for Borowczyk, with its inherent contradiction between participation and non-participation, acceptance and rejection. Perhaps it is pressing the point to meditate on a conflict between East European uneasiness about being watched and the West European proclivity for staring at anything, but there is certainly an element here of political reference. And on a personal level, the spyglass is as disturbing a metaphor for the audience as for the film-maker, emphasising as it

does the immense gulf between emotional and physical involvement—and at the same time the absorption of information at long distance that can alter instantly one's mood, activity, or life. For Kabal, peering at a colourful succession of beautiful girls being picked up by an irascible old man, the binocular images spell out the frustration—and the antithesis—of his life with Madame K; for the Governor of Goto, they mean, in vastly more tragic terms, very much the same.

The Kabals staged a preliminary concert in 1962 (Borowczyk took another five years to complete their *Théâtre*) in which their casual dismemberment of each other could have been interpreted as an extreme form of slapstick. When *Jeux des Anges* turned up, however, with its beguiling multi-lingual reassurances that it intended no resemblances to the living or the dead, the edge to Borowczyk's fun had suddenly become murderously sharp. Looking back at this obscene masterpiece, one can see an entire blueprint for the two feature films, with the one vital exception that *Kabal* and *Goto* are love stories where *Jeux des Anges* provides no compensations for its images of cruelty.

As with the opening of *The Silence* we find ourselves on a journey by train into a darkly unknown land, and as with Bergman's film we halt in a community seething with the assertion of its own distorted identity. Borowczyk's title suggests delicacy and charm, but his angels amuse themselves with an almost intolerable savagery. To the accompaniment of a church organ and a gruffly harmonious chant that contrives to be both monastically devout and chillingly pagan, a seemingly endless succession of executions takes place, with featureless shaven heads rolling noisily down to collect in enormous boxes. Pipes are everywhere, truncated at an angle like slashed arteries drained of blood—even the pounding organ (shown briefly with shapeless figures grouped around it in startling serenity) seems to have been constructed from human fibre. At one horribly coherent moment the organ pipes are levelled like rifles and a hopeless supplicant's flayed corpse hangs briefly, red meat, before slopping down out of sight.

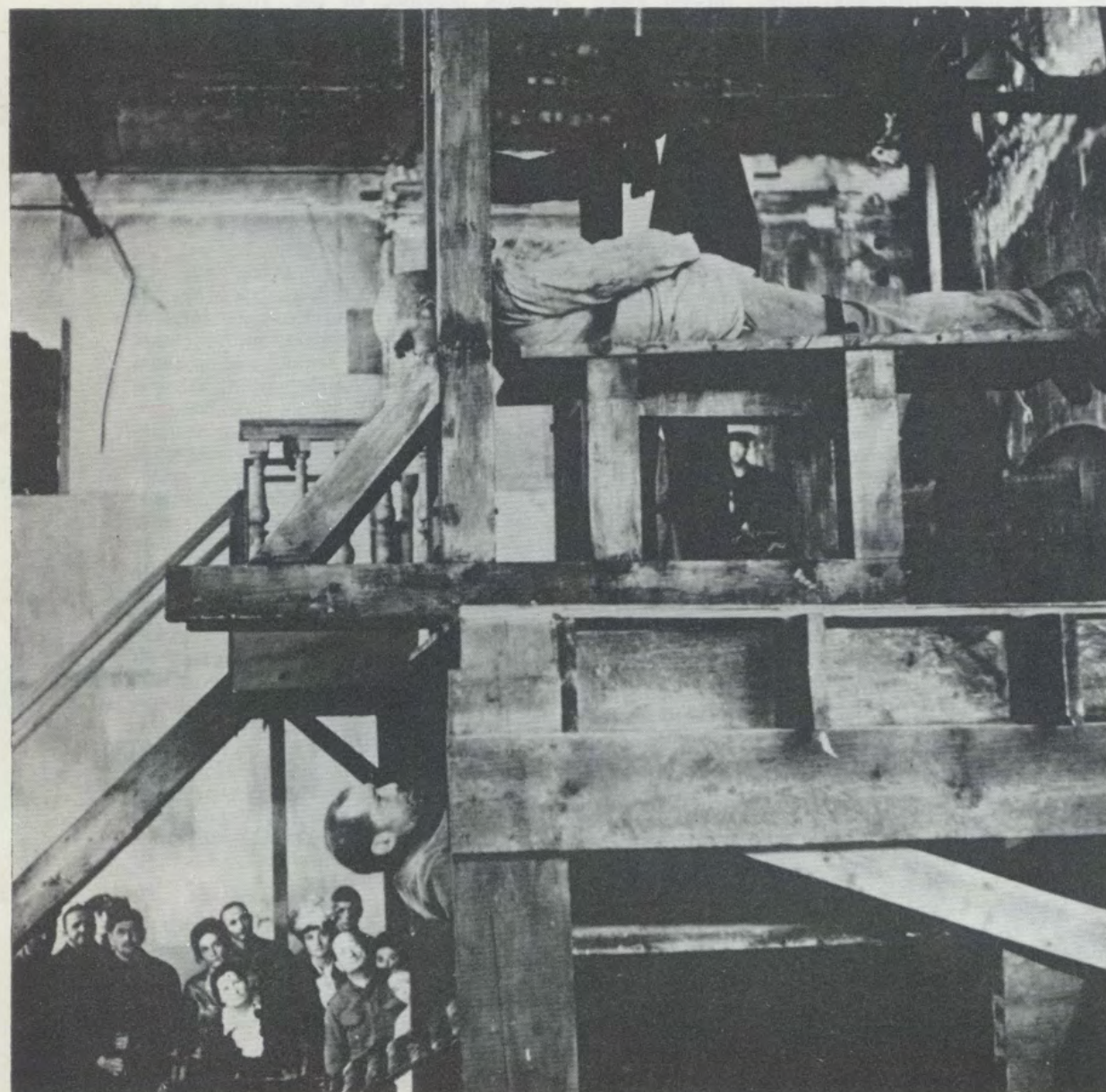
Wings are everywhere too, being sawn off in swathes or, in anticipation of Madame Kabal's gun-toting, being shot down abruptly as they flee across distant, sombre landscapes; as one wing lies in state on a white-sheeted plinth a stream of blue blood flows with agonising beauty from its severed joint. These are images from Hieronymus Bosch, shuddering like them at the glorious ingenuity of divine retribution—yet equally they are images from Francis Bacon, from Dali, from Max Ernst, and they define a compendium of dislocations. And although the train finally carries us hurriedly away from Heaven, Europe, or what you will, the song of the communicants refuses to be left behind.

\* \* \*

What seems to have happened to Borowczyk between this scathing despair in *Jeux des Anges* and the more muted melancholy of *Théâtre de Monsieur et Madame Kabal* and of *Goto*, *l'Île d'Amour* is best defined through his first venture into live-action, *Rosalie* (1966). While establishing that Ligia Branice, whose monologue in close-up carries the film, was more than ready for the demands of the starring part she is given in *Goto*, *Rosalie* also introduced a depth of compassion that Borowczyk had never previously shown. He opens with a track along tables bearing the evidence in the case of a servant girl accused of murdering her new-born illegitimate children—a photograph of the soldier who seduced her, a workbox containing primitive surgical instruments and knitted babyclothes, bloodstained bedding, a spade encrusted with earth, and finally a pathetic package of newspaper and string. The camera turns to face the girl, making her statement against a shimmering white wall which quickly seems to bleach out everything except her pleading features, hanging in the air like smoke.

As she tells her story, weeping throughout, Borowczyk cuts in the relevant bits of evidence—dark, solid, irrefutable signposts to her downfall. Like all Borowczyk furniture they have a tangible existence of their own, mute witnesses to a long succession of generations who have used and abandoned





Above left: "Gavotte".  
 Right: devouring hair and feathers  
 in "Dom" and "Renaissance".  
 Left: executioners  
 and victim in "Goto".  
 Above: Ligia Branice  
 in "Rosalie".



them but to whom they remain, like the fidgeting odds and ends in *Renaissance*, disconcertingly loyal. And like all Borowczyk furniture they behave unexpectedly. As Rosalie describes her despair at the realisation that she would have to cope alone with two babies, not just with one who would have stood a faint enough chance of being looked after properly, the knitting begins to unravel itself, the blood fades from the bedding, the spade becomes clean. The innocence of her acknowledged guilt affects the evidence, the filmmaker, and ourselves alike. The grim relics vanish from the table and a single title at the end announces that Rosalie was acquitted, as we had known by this time she must be.

Yet as usual Borowczyk's method has an uncomfortable complexity. The last items of evidence to disappear are the macabre parcels, which before they vanish twist themselves open to reveal: nothing. The anticlimax is a nagging one as Rosalie weeps on and we stare at the table's bare surface. Slowly the suspicion forms that there never was any evidence, never any crime, that the girl has invented the whole story from the void of her loneliness and either believes now that it is true or wishes that it were, and that her conviction has become ours. And arising from this comes our unavoidable complicity in her 'crime' by our willingness to condone it; with the hypnotic purity of her face, Rosalie has contrived to talk us into and out of whatever she pleased.

Echoes here of the fantasies of *Dom*, but more strongly of the choking stranglehold maintained by the women in *Kabal* and *Goto*; and in terms of style Borowczyk is marking out the new territory he explores so precisely in *Gavotte* and *Diptych*, where contradiction, contrast and ambiguity spin in a perpetual challenge. Just as we stare at the empty table at the conclusion of *Rosalie*, so we contemplate the wooden chest in *Gavotte* that might, after all, never have contained a live dwarf let alone a dead one, or gaze entranced at the glossy displays of flowers in the second *volet* of *Diptych* that seem both a refutation and a celebration of the stark existence of a veteran peasant as revealed in the film's first half. Ultimately Borowczyk's visions double back on his audience, as if we were imagining them, not him—as if, like characters from Kafka (to whom he acknowledges a debt), we were seeking to blame someone else for our own delusions of inconsequence.

\* \* \*

The disturbing impression that Borowczyk's characters are beyond his control is plainly enough illustrated at the beginning of *Théâtre de Monsieur et Madame Kabal*, in which the animator's attempts to find a head for Madame K (varying from a bomb to the Mona Lisa) are angrily erased by Madame herself until, defeated, he gives her the predatory features first seen in *Concert*. She at once summons Borowczyk on to the screen for an interrogation which rapidly turns into an attempt at seduction; avoiding this with difficulty, he exchanges himself for Monsieur Kabal, whose fixed, imperceptible smile and small square body dance devoted attendance to the lady throughout the incidents that follow.

Were it not, indeed, for Kabal's habit of peering at girls through his binoculars the Kabal household would appear, in its extraordinary way, to be one of complete and genuine harmony. As it is, if Kabal finds his wife as monstrous as we do (which is a reasonable inference to be drawn from his voyeurism), he is too much of a gentleman to say so—he even replaces a photograph he has taken of her with a postcard print of a little girl with a rose. This characteristic Borowczyk image, in which charming nostalgia and a sense of frozen loss are combined, hovers throughout the film with such persistence that its meaning for the Kabals becomes unavoidably clear. Just as Rosalie needs to relive the most important fantasy of her empty life, so the Kabals cherish an image of their relationship that is for them a necessary reality: the little girl is both Madame K and a symbol for the undercurrent of tenderness that connects husband and wife. And when, in a sequence of unabashed sentimentality, Madame rocks Kabal to sleep in his cradle to the sound of 'Stille Nacht', it is the face of the little girl that fades with him into his dreams.

Borowczyk's approach to music, it's worth remarking at this point, is almost primitively consistent. For fun, he uses solo brass instruments, as in *Renaissance* or *Joachim's Dictionary*. For ceremony, he favours the church organ, as in *Jeux des Anges*. And with increasing confidence, he has used classical music for passion ever since Madame Kabal turned slowly into the persistent angel during her piano piece in *Concert*. This simplicity is outrageously successful, particularly in *Gavotte* where the cascade of notes from an unseen player acts as the justification for the entire action of the film, and in *Diptych* where the immaculate aria from Bizet's *The Pearlfishers* serves to complete the portrait of an absolute perfection. In *Goto*, very satisfyingly, everything reappears—the organ, brass instruments, the tentative solos, and, with an ecstatic rightness, a movement from Handel which accompanies the film's emotional climaxes. Borowczyk being too anarchic a film-maker to abandon parody without a murmur, the use of 'Stille Nacht' for the Kabals still retains an edge of irony to its astonishing sweetness. By the time *Goto* is reached, however, the self-consciousness has given way to a splendid romanticism—splendid, because as in *Diptych* it is neatly counterbalanced by the roughhewn settings around it.

Rough is certainly the word for the everyday existence of the Kabals, whose concrete cottage sits on a wilderness crossed by numberless deep chasms. As is only to be expected in Borowczyk's world, they live in a bizarre symbiosis with clouds of flying creatures, with small doggyish companions, and with a caterpillar-like parasite which emerges hurriedly from anything (including portions of anatomy) that gets thrown away. 'Symbols provided by life' announce the credits, and it soon becomes apparent that within their extraordinary environment the Kabals do indeed pursue an almost conventional normality—just as it must be accepted, however reluctantly, that the rituals of *Jeux des Anges* are determined by an established and scrupulously respected code.

Our horror in witnessing this in action comes simply from not knowing the rules, or, rather, from the recognition that the rules are mutations from those of our own society. Borowczyk is a great respecter of integrity: once the premise is established, as in *Renaissance*, that a given law may be repealed (and even time may run backwards as the physicists, dawdling way behind Aldiss, Ballard and Dick, are beginning to discover), its repealed form is demonstrated complete. Thus *Goto* and *Kabal*, like the extravagant but not inapt vocabulary of Joachim, are constructed around a logic and a tradition that are adhered to unquestioningly by their users. Like any parable in which distortion leads to a closer 'reality', Borowczyk's films ultimately call into question the validity of our way of life by comparison with the one he shows us.

So the Kabals go to the beach for Madame's rather unco-ordinated swim, and they summon the unfathomable wisdom of the medical profession (operating its hooks, saws and grappling irons omnisciently from the skies) when Madame falls ill, and they take shelter when Madame delightedly imitates a television programme and blows the house up, and they throw a party at which innumerable copies of themselves get stoned. What matter that beneath a shower of truncated pipes, Madame scrubs her back with a thing like a boat-hook? Or that her illness is diagnosed by Kabal's reference (naturally enough) to *Corps Profond* and by his physical exploration of her cavernous interior to the strains, again, of organ music? Or that to satisfy her recovered appetite she consumes a kind of flying ant-eater, complete with the arrow that shot it down? With due allowance for hyperbole (surely Madame's mirror wouldn't crack anew every day at the sight of her?), these are casually commonplace events, small pleasures, small crises in the placid pattern of domesticity.

\* \* \*

On the island of Goto there is at first a similar serenity. Its tiny population toils away at a stone-quarry under the benevolent supervision of the Governor and his soldiers, keeping guard with binoculars in their various watchtowers.



Goto III (Pierre Brasseur) is comfortably married to the beautiful Glossia, whom he loves to watch at the riding stables; periodically they visit the entertainment provided by the exercise of justice, whereby all miscreants are subjected to trials of strength with each other and the losers executed. It is when one such criminal, Grozo, throws himself on Goto's mercy instead of seeing the contest out that the trouble starts. Goto not only pardons him but appoints him to help with the three most important duties of the household—cleaning Goto's boots, feeding Goto's dogs, and catching flies. Given such elevation, Grozo becomes hungry for further power, particularly as he has been obsessed with Glossia ever since he buried his face in her lap when pleading for mercy. The film parallels his obsession with that of Goto, for whom Glossia is also an intriguingly elusive phenomenon he adores but can somehow never quite capture. Unknown to the Governor (although possibly suspected?), she is in love with Gono, the young officer in charge of the riding stables, with whom she plans to escape from the island in a small boat.

Borowczyk unfolds the story with a kind of fatalism; nothing is overemphasised or exaggerated, not even the muted performance of the normally ebullient Brasseur. The discovery of Glossia's adultery (seen, of course, through binoculars), the death of Goto, and the manipulation by Grozo of his own appointment as the new Governor, these developments follow with almost placid inevitability. And in the final sequence of the film, with the eloquent guidance of Handel, we find out why. Glossia falls to her death while evading Grozo, who has assumed that as he is now Governor she will automatically submit to him, and he heartbrokenly drags her body to the bedroom at the top of their residence. As she lies in white on a white bed, her innocence, like

Rosalie's, intact despite everything we know about her, Glossia slowly opens her eyes. And on this resurrection the film ends.

For all the images of destruction, nothing ever dies in Borowczyk's films. Instead, the pervasive life force that activated the mound of hair in *Dom* flows throughout his work in an irresistible torrent. Whatever is broken is repaired, whatever is hacked to pieces yet retains, like the fish the Kabals have for breakfast or the decapitated giant in *Goto*, a confident mood of permanence. In *Renaissance*, the heap of charred waste reassembles itself into its separate, intact components; in *Rosalie*, the images of death fade as if they were too inconsequential to have existed in the first place; in Kabal territory, the ruined home is tidily reconstituted by the 'butterflies' that themselves rise time and again from the lethal administrations of Madame Kabal, who in turn survives the ordeal of surgical beheading with characteristic phlegm. This is not to say that Goto III doesn't stay very dead when he is shot down: as an individual he is expendable in that he exists simply through his role as Governor. Similarly, one flycatcher is replaced by another, or one anonymous angel by another in *Jeux des Anges*.

Glossia, however, and all the immaculate tribe she represents, is the enduring kind. Borowczyk's supreme wish-fulfilment, and ours, is the spectacle of an inanimate object demonstrating that the wealth of memories and associations that have been heaped upon it by human habit have imbued it with an active sentence. This is, after all, the animator's function, and Borowczyk has devoted his career to making us take it seriously. Over the same period, his suspicion has grown to a certainty that cinema, too, has an autonomous vitality—and Glossia's sleepy eyes suggest that instead of her being part of our dream, we might be part of hers.

"GOTO, L'ILE D'AMOUR": PIERRE BRASSEUR, LIGIA BRANICE.





# Talking with Peckinpah







SAM PECKINPAH

THE LOS ANGELES opening of *The Wild Bunch*, Sam Peckinpah's first completed film since *Major Dundee*, was only a few days away. Peckinpah himself, bearded, tanned, relaxed, looking (as all the best directors of Westerns seem to do) like a character stepped from one of his own movies, sat in his office at Warner-Seven Arts and reminisced. Mostly about his pioneer ancestors and his own youth in and around Fresno in mid-California. Not much about the various difficulties with producers and the front office which, at one time, had threatened to cut off his career as completely as Rowland Brown's—who had shown this same pirate independence towards Hollywood's conventions, and is still remembered around as the director who once punched an M-G-M executive producer—had been extinguished in the early thirties.

For two and a half years Peckinpah, the best director of his generation in Hollywood, had not worked at all apart from a couple of writing assignments. Then Daniel Melnick had asked him to direct *Noon Wine* for television. The result had even pleased the demanding Katherine Anne Porter ("a tough, lovely lady" as Peckinpah calls her). So much so that, in a letter to Joel Reisner, who was producing and writing a radio documentary on Peckinpah, Miss Porter had regretted that he had not done *Ship of Fools*, since *Noon Wine* had so completely translated her story into visual terms.

The production had reminded Hollywood how little it could afford to ignore a director of Peckinpah's talent. Its acclaim led to *The Wild Bunch* which, in turn, had led to *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*, now completed. And now Peckinpah was preparing to leave to direct the second unit of *The Hawaiians* in Hawaii. But of those years in the wilderness he speaks without bitterness. He blames himself for the troubles surrounding *Major Dundee*. For making early compromises, such as the introduction of the girl, Teresa, which made

it so much more difficult to resist later demands when they came.

Even *The Wild Bunch* had run into a certain amount of post-production difficulty. At two sneak previews the violence had turned queasy stomachs in the audience (and, in Kansas City, the theatre where the preview was held is supposed to have been picketed next day). As a result 35 of the bloodier minutes had been cut. But Europe will actually see a more complete version than America, since the flashbacks showing how William Holden received his wounds, cut for showing here, are being left in.

But *The Wild Bunch* has the themes and obsessions which can be traced through all of Peckinpah's work, right back to his television series *The Westerner*, still regarded by many in Hollywood as the most realistic and honest look at the old West yet to appear. In the original script of *The Wild Bunch* there is a brief narration which was to be spoken—and never was—over the opening shot:

"To most of America in 1913 the Age of Innocence had arrived and the stories of the Indian Wars and the Gold Rush and the Great Gun-fighters had become either bar-room ballyhoo or front-porch reminiscences. . . . But on both sides of the Rio Grande men still lived as they had in the '70s and '80s—unchanged men in a changing land."

This narration was never used, I suspect, because it was redundant. Ford's heroes ride forever through an unchanging landscape; Peckinpah's carry their moral inflexibility through a changing land.

SAM PECKINPAH: "The first writing I did was on *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Don Siegel. Did a rewrite on that. Later he was asked to be producer-director of *Gunsmoke*. When he was considering it he asked me if I would like to write some of the segments. I said I would. He turned the assignment down, however, and another director I worked with, Charles (Marquis) Warren, took it on and gave me my first chance to write for the series: it took four months to do and was called *The Coup*. Which I saw—oh—three days ago. And was astonished how simply and how well it was done. Even then we were dealing in terms of minorities and outsiders.

The first year they did twenty-six and then picked up for another twenty-six. But out of the first thirty-six *Gunsmokes* I did eleven . . . twelve . . . thirteen? I can't remember. I did once check things out, and I've written seventy-two scripts altogether.

I had been working with the producers of *Broken Arrow*. They liked the scripts I was doing, but the show was going off the air. Elliot Arnold gave me a chance to direct the very last show. They really had nothing to lose, but they behaved like gentlemen. That started a pattern that lasted for about three years. Every

time I started a show I would walk on a set, lay out the first three or four shots, then go back to the head and throw up. Then I'd get a milk shake, settle down, and make a picture.

*The Rifleman*, *Klondike*, *The Westerner* were all on the air at the same time. I created all three of them. Although Arnold Laven says I did not create *The Rifleman* since he suggested, correctly, that the part Chuck Connors played should have a boy involved. I said, That's a hell of an idea. Therefore he told me I did not deserve to get creator credit."

"My father, David E. Peckinpah, my grandfather, Denver Church, my brother, Denver C. Peckinpah, are all Superior Court Judges—or were. When I was a kid I grew up with those people sitting around with my uncle. Sitting around a dining room table talking about law and order, truth and justice, on a bible which was very big in our family. I suppose I felt like an outsider, and I started to question them. I guess I'm still questioning.

Peckinpah Mountain is just north of South Fork, where my grandfather homesteaded in 1871. He built a sawmill up there on Peckinpah Mountain in 1873 and a lodging house in South Fork, just across the river from North Fork. Interesting thing, when I was growing up. Say I was nine years old, or something like that. My grandmother and I were very close. She was one of the great ladies of the world. And I was raving about Calamity Jane. She turned and told me, She was a dirty drunken woman and she smelled bad. And I said, How do you know? And she said, I saw her and talked to her—and your grandfather spent too much time with her.

So then I found out that my grandfather had taken his wife and a baby—because he thought he had tuberculosis—on a wagon up into Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and sold kitchen utensils which she had made by hand. He didn't have tuberculosis, by the way, and was Assistant District Attorney of Fresno County when he left.

My grandfather was in and out of Congress, in and out of the District Attorney's office. He was a lawyer, he was in the cattle business, and he also ran a pack-station at a place called Miller Meadow. Bill Dylan ran the lower ranch for him, and was instrumental in helping him go broke about thirteen times. Bill wore bib-overalls, stood about six feet four inches tall, and carried a double-action .45 in the pocket of his overalls. One time—he was a mule-skinner too—a mule kicked him and drove the watch he was wearing, a gold watch, into his chest. Which probably saved his life. Bill picked himself up off the ground, looked at the mule, and said: 'How would you like to



kiss my sister's black cat's ass?" I used that in *The Wild Bunch*.

The line, 'I want to enter my house justified' in *Ride The High Country* is my father's. We talked about that shortly before he died. He died just before the film was released. He never saw it."

"Let's see. *Route 66* and *The Flintstones* knocked *The Westerner* off the air. We were too early for that kind of a show. But we had a lot of letters; over a thousand which I got personally. The story of *Jeff*. Now there's quite a story. It was the first show of the series and nine NBC affiliates called up the next day and said if the show went any further they were leaving. But we ran a comedy the next time, so I guess they stayed on.

There was a house of ill repute in Nevada, called The Big Four. It's more of a bar really, but there are certain ladies who work there. I hunted that country and I lived there—not necessarily at The Big Four, but within reaching distance. And I walked in on a Sunday morning, around twelve o'clock, one day about twelve years ago. And there was a woman sweeping up. In a jumper suit. Which didn't quite figure out, since she was seventy-two years old. As I walked in she smiled at me and said, Would you like to turn a trick, honey? And I said, No, I'd like a beer though. Her name was Mae and we started talking. She told me she'd been

working there . . . twenty-two . . . twenty-five . . . fifty . . . since she was eighteen years old. That's got to be better than fifty-three years. And I said, Did you ever want to leave? This is now about five o'clock, and we're on double shots of beer by that time. She laughed and said, A young fellow got to fall in love with me once. He'd take me out. I loved him. And he loved me. He whipped everybody. And I started to go, and then I said, No. And he said, Why? And I said, Because I like it here. So I stayed.

It was a pretty good story. But now it's getting on towards midnight. I had about seventy miles to go, and it had started to spit snow outside . . . and I didn't know where camp was. So I take off in a jeep and drive up into the mountains. Get lost. Along about three o'clock I see a ranch with a bunkhouse. And a bunkhouse I was familiar with. Many times they would leave the generator going until it just burned out. It happened that I had a bottle of brandy, so I just walked in and woke up two cowboys who were there. One was an old timer. The other was a younger fellow. We all had a drink and they went back to sleep. But, by God, this old timer told me the same story. It was his fight. And he said, No, she wouldn't come. So I got together with Bob Everley and we wrote a script called *Jeff*. I was back a couple of years later—Mae's dead now—and I said, I did your story on television. And she said, What are you going to pay me?

And I said, Well Mae, what do you want? She said, I guess I'll have a beer.

Yes, a touch of The Big Four did get into the hotel in *Ride the High Country*. Here and there. That old mining camp? That's Coarsegold. Which is an actual place. There was Finegold and Coarsegold. As you came down Finegold Creek there were the tents and the shacks. My granddad's ranch was right above there. When I was a kid, five years old or something, they were still mining, they were still there. So it was kind of like going home. Today the ranch is gone. There are motels. It's all gone."

"Tom Gries did one fine show for me. A beautiful show. He wrote and directed it. Possibly . . . I detest saying it . . . possibly the best of *The Westerners*, *Line Camp*. Which later became *Will Penny*. I took issue with him on that the other day and he said, I wouldn't steal from anybody else except myself and you.

Now I'm going to Hawaii to do second-unit for Tommy. On *The Hawaiians*. We must stop working in compartments and start working together. Johnny Frankenheimer and I had a discussion on this. In fact we started in on it, but it never quite worked out. But to get together . . . show each other scripts . . . work as a consort . . . I really believe in it. I'm so tired of this absolutely childish approach in Hollywood. Nobody will share. Everybody's hiding. Don't tell what you're

"THE WILD BUNCH".







"THE WILD BUNCH".

doing. Don't show a script. On *The Westerner* I had grips come up and say, I don't like it. It doesn't figure that the girl would do this in those circumstances. We'd change it right there. Because they were right. That's the most exciting thing about making a film, for me. It happened on *The Wild Bunch*. And it really happened on *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*. But so many people want an eight to five job. I'm not an eight to five man. And I don't want to work with people who are."

"We cut about twenty minutes out of *The Wild Bunch* that could have been left in. But there are only about three minutes I take issue with. There's a flashback and about six cuts I'd like to have back. What I'd really like is about two more weeks to work on the film, which I couldn't do because of release dates.

The Production Code people wanted some cuts made, some changes. I lost two good lines I wanted to keep in. One is where Tector Gorch is in the wine vat, drunk, with a Mexican lady, and he's pulling out her left breast, I believe. And he turns to his brother and says, Lookee here, Lyle, nipples as long as your thumb. The line wasn't in the script. It just came out, a natural thing. But they took issue on that.

The other line comes right at the end when Strother Martin is riding out and he says, Let's get out of this goddam place. We said 'goddam' about seven times in the film, but they wouldn't let us use it here.

Actually I went back and cut several

parts of the violence out of the film after we got our rating, because I thought they were excessive to the points I wanted to make. I not only want to talk about violence in the film but I have a story to tell, too, and I don't want the violence, *per se*, to dominate what is happening to the people.

I think the film comes out ninety-four to ninety-six per cent of what I wanted. And that's a damned high average. How much would I accept of *Ride The High Country*? Seventy-eight to eighty-two of what I wanted. *Major Dundee*. . .

*Dundee* was one of the most painful things that has ever happened in my life. Making a picture is . . . I don't know . . . you become in love with it. It's part of your life. And when you see it being mutilated and cut to pieces it's like losing a child or something. When I saw it happening I went a little crazy. And then I learned. It was not the responsibility of Mr. Bresler or Mr. Frankovich, or whoever they were, it was my responsibility for going to work under those conditions. *Dundee* was a fine film. Possibly the best picture I've made in my life. At two hours and forty-four minutes it was much better than *Ride The High Country*. There's fifty-five minutes gone. And it's wrongly cut. I was with Jerry Bresler in the cutting room. It was agony. For Jerry, who is a film-maker, had a totally different concept. I'm not saying he was right or wrong. But you must go in, when you work with a producer, knowing that you've made the same kind of film. Otherwise it's death. It was death on him. It was death on me. The

picture was never previewed, it never went out to an audience. It went out to one group of exhibitors in New York. That's it."

"I think the finest picture ever made was *Rashomon*. And *La Strada*, the trilogy Ray made, Ford's *Clementine*, *Treasure of Sierra Madre* obviously—it had a great influence on *The Wild Bunch*—*Ace in the Hole*, *Forbidden Games*.

I believe in the complete innocence of children. They have no idea of good and evil. It's an acquired taste."

"*The Glory Guys*? That was a total disaster because of the casting. All the people in the picture were good. That is, they've all been good in other pictures but they didn't really belong in that one. It was a wretched film. And one of the reasons I've made up my mind not to write any more. But I was on the street. I had to write.

Possibly the best script I've ever written is in the hands of a producer named Marvin Schwartz who detests it. It's called *The Hi-Lo Country*. Easily the best thing I have ever written. Two different people have called me to say that they had been contacted to rewrite it, and they've sent it back saying, We will not touch it. Which happened to me with the first feature I ever wrote. Which later became *One-Eyed Jacks*. Mr. Schwartz has just produced *100 Rifles*. You'll have to ask him for his reasons. I don't understand. I wish I did."



BUNUEL'S "LA VOIE LACTÉE".

# Berlin Edinburgh Moscow Venice 69

## BERLIN

**D**AY AFTER DAY comatose critics staggered out of the Zoo-Palast asking each other how long it could last, while at the much-vaunted Festival meeting-place a solitary waitress pottered round forlornly dusting rows of empty tables. In this island of lost souls gaiety is a precious commodity at the best of times; this year at Berlin it was in such short supply that one actually hoped the students would break up the Festival, as they threatened to do last year. But the Festival organisation had already forestalled that prospect by simply accommodating some of the ideas thrown up by last year's rumblings of revolution. No more evening dress; the junketing much curtailed; open discussions after each of the films in competition; special screenings at reduced prices in suburban cinemas.

If only these organisational innovations had been matched by what was actually on the screen. With well over a hundred films to choose from, everything from a celebratory revival of *The Singing Fool* (dubbed into *Mein Sonny Boy*) to the no doubt absorbing *Secret Life of Count Porno*, it's possible that an unheralded masterpiece slipped by unseen. But I heard of none, and with just a few exceptions the films on offer divided more or less equally between tedious apostrophes

to revolutionary thinkers past and present and a succession of stultifying mediocrities. In this second category were films like Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Kälter als der Tod*, a half-baked, self-enamoured variation on *Bande à Part*; or Elio Petri's *Un Tranquillo Posto di Campagna*, which has Franco Nero as a painter tormented into madness by the banging and clanging of a poltergeist, while Vanessa Redgrave as his girl-friend pops up at intervals to look bewildered; or Walter Lima Jnr.'s *Brasil Ano 2000*, an obscurely motivated futuristic black comedy, with musical interludes and contemporary political overtones, about a peasant family persuaded to disguise themselves as Indians so that this forgotten race will be represented at the launching of a rocket.

On the revolutionary front there was Edoardo Bruno's *La sua Giornata di Gloria*, which begins with a flagrant dedication to Bertolucci (Pierre Clémenti at the Coliseum proclaiming the cinema of engagement through a megaphone) and continues with an account of how three young hopefuls spend 'a marvellous summer on a rooftop sipping drinks and talking about revolution'—it only needs someone to mention Brecht and there follows a potted biography ('born in Augsburg in 1898 . . .') and a practical demonstration of the theory of alienation. Or Zelimir Zilnik's *Early Works* (which unaccountably took the Golden Bear), a paper-thin allegory



about a girl who offers herself to each of her three male companions as they prance up hill and down dale in search of an answer to 'the riddle of the wise old man Marx'—who, along with Engels, is credited with the film's additional dialogue. Or Johan Bergenstråhle's *Made in Sweden*, which voyeuristically interpolates documentary footage of starving Indian children into an opportunist story about a journalist and his sociologist girl-friend uncovering Swedish financial chicanery in Thailand.

After ten days of this enervating bombast, Buñuel's *La Voie Lactée* was like walking into a cool breeze after an over-heated Turkish bath. In what amounts to an encyclopaedia of heresy, Buñuel takes us on a picaresque journey through time and space in a search for that ultimate truth which he more than anyone knows he will never find. Our guides are a couple of vagabond pilgrims (Laurent Terzieff and Paul Frankeur) on their way to the shrine at Santiago de Compostella; they never reach it, but their pilgrimage (beautifully shot in pastel colours by Christian Matras) encompasses a miniature history of the Church, its dogmas and its heretics. At a wayside inn a gendarme debates the meaning of transubstantiation with a priest, who is then carted off to a lunatic asylum; Christ makes a jolly after-dinner speech and performs miracles with the nonchalance of a professional conjurer; a Jansenist duels with a Jesuit; a renegade nun is crucified at the altar; the Marquis de Sade blasphemes to order; the Pope is executed by student revolutionaries. Buñuel's testament? Perhaps. But though the film can doubtless be pillaged for hidden meanings, the very absence of any internal logic is sufficient indication that Buñuel's purpose is not (indeed, has never been) didactic. As usual, the barbs are planted with unerring accuracy; but arguments about the existence of God, Buñuel implies in a wickedly funny scene set in a hotel, are ultimately as meaningful as arguments about the right way to lay out a menu.

Bergman's *The Rite*, shown on the fringe, is much more obviously an exorcism of personal ghosts. Originally made for Swedish television, divided into self-contained scenes, and shot almost entirely in riveting close-up, this is Bergman's most uncompromising baring of his artist's soul, more harrowing even than *Persona* because the combination of starkly explicit dialogue and direct appeal to the camera involves (or repels) the spectator at the most elementary level. Bergman's mouthpiece is a trio of cabaret performers arraigned on some vague obscenity charge. Their interrogator, at first unctuously civil, gradually breaks them down; the performers are ruthlessly destroyed, and destroy each other as their masks are stripped. But art is inviolable, the artist has always the last resource of his art: in the final scene the performers, like Vogler in *The Face*, avenge themselves on their tormentor by a simple application of the ritual that is their art. One emerges from this devastating film both mentally and emotionally exhausted. Which is how it should be.

But Buñuel and Bergman alone do not make a festival. One could always turn to the Retrospective (Gance and a selection of American musicals) for consolation, and there were one or two discoveries (notably the engaging black humour of Gordan Mihic and Ljubisa Kozomara's *A Fairytale*, and Branko Ivanda's *Gravitation*, a sardonically observed account of the awful adventures of a bank clerk) in the Young Cinema Week, devoted this year to Yugoslavia. But apart from John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), there was little else of interest. Brian de Palma's *Greetings*, a series of loosely linked sketches about a draft-dodger in New York, was intermittently very funny—particularly in its glimpses of the perils of computer dating—but rather too conscious of its own cuteness. Peter Zadek's *Ich bin ein Elefant, Madame*, a German version of *If . . .*, had just a few good ideas in among its tiresome rehearsal of familiar German neuroses. And the three British films—Peter Hall's *Three Into Two Won't Go*, Waris Hussein's *A Touch of Love* (uneven and frequently glib, but with a surprisingly restrained performance from Sandy Dennis), and Richard Lester's messy adaptation of *The Bed Sitting Room*—provoked little comment and need none here.

There remains what was for most people the surprise of the Festival, Satyajit Ray's *The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha*. An immensely engaging musical fairy story about two aspiring musicians granted three wishes by the king of the ghosts, this is something of a cross between a Karel Zeman film and a very superior version of those song and dance pictures which make up much of the Indian cinema's staple product. There are some marvellous moments, and the music (by Ray himself) is almost hypnotic in its pulsating rhythms; but the pace is perhaps just a little too leisurely, and there are some noticeably slack periods around the middle. Still, Ray obviously enjoyed making it—and it was the only sheerly enjoyable film in a glum festival.

DAVID WILSON

## MOSCOW

**E**VEN BY THE MOST indulgent standards, the films in competition at the Sixth Moscow Festival were a sorry lot. Perhaps not more so than at Berlin; perhaps even slightly less, in that on the whole they were not particularly marked by pretension. Indeed, most seemed to represent the basic commercial common denominator of their countries' product—though whether from policy on the part of the selectors or hope on the part of the entrants that, given this big shop-window on the East, that sort of film was most likely to be bought up for Soviet distribution, it is hard to know.

To find qualities in the official entries was very much like grasping at straws; the most substantial straw being the Cuban *Lucia*, directed by Humberto Solás. This is a big, splashy, often consciously virtuoso piece of film-making, three episodes in three different styles, three love stories in three revolutionary situations, progressively relaxing from carnage to light comedy in the third, Castro-era tale. Solás has a real flair, and obvious zest for film-making; but in normal circumstances the film would surely seem far from the masterpiece that many in Moscow rather hysterically felt it to be.

The same is true, in a very different way, of the only other film to inspire much serious respect, Andras Kovacs' *Walls*. One can see, of course, that it is very well-intentioned, intelligent, and even, in its careful, sympathetic study of Hungary's 'lost generation', the puzzled forties, quite politically daring. But even remembering *Gertrud* and hesitating to formulate any hard-and-fast rules about the role of dialogue in the cinema, it is impossible not to feel that there is just too much here, too exhaustively explicit—to such an extent that the soundtrack could make a perfectly self-sufficient radio play, and lose little in the process. Admittedly Kovacs does make a determined attempt to cinematise it all by frantically moving round the locations for his static discussions, but if anything that underlines the film's deficiencies. It is a sad disappointment after the same director's extraordinary *Cold Days*.

And that, apart from the variously known quantities of

KONCHALOVSKY'S "A NEST OF GENTLEFOLK".







SHINODA'S "DOUBLE SUICIDE".

2001 and *Oliver!* and a moderately pleasing Czech-Russian adventure story, *The Lanfier Colony* (directed by Jan Schmidt under rather obvious difficulties in August 1968), was about that as far as the festival proper was concerned. Even Russia herself had only an innocuous school drama, *Until Monday* (a sort of Soviet *Up the Down Staircase*), and Ivan Piriev's stifflingly solid, respectful plod through *The Brothers Karamazov* to offer in competition, advance rumours that an uncut version of Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* might at long last be forthcoming having proved unfounded. (Though it is cheering to hear that Tarkovsky is at present at work on a new film, *Solaris*, after the story by Stanislas Lem.)

But, fortunately, the Moscow scene was not so gloomy as might appear from the foregoing. On the fringes there were chances to see several new Soviet films by directors of the younger generation which go a long way to restore one's faith in the creative possibilities of the new Russian cinema. The real prize among them is Andrei Konchalovsky's *A Nest of Gentlefolk*, after Turgenev. Konchalovsky is known in the West primarily by *The First Teacher*, a story of the early days of communism in Central Asia handled, surprisingly, in a very conscious style which suggested close study of a lot of Japanese cinema. Since then he has made another feature, *Assia's Love Story*, which roused controversy (the real peasants in it objected because they were not allowed to wear their Sunday best), had only a limited showing, and now seems to be unseeable; from all accounts it weirdly but sometimes compellingly mingles *cinéma-vérité* techniques with interludes of an almost surrealist strangeness.

From this it would seem that Konchalovsky is something of an aesthete, still looking for his own style. Whether he has found it in *A Nest of Gentlefolk* is arguable, but he has cer-

tainly found a style, and one of stunning beauty. It is suggestive of nothing more than a combination of *The Leopard* and *Elvira Madigan*, but all specifically Russian in flavour and setting. Each image is breathtakingly beautiful, and yet the film as a whole is not weighed down; the story of slowly blossoming passion, its brief outburst and sudden snuffing-out, moves with easy confidence, the people look as though they are used to living in the clothes, and the backgrounds, however beautiful, remain finally just that, backgrounds.

A very different literary adaptation, *A Bad Joke*, by A. Alov and V. Naumov after Dostoevsky, makes it clear that Konchalovsky is not the only remarkable talent among the young. The story concerns a civil servant who drunkenly decides one night to show a true seigneurial spirit by dropping in unannounced on the wedding celebrations of a humble subordinate, with disastrous consequences for all. Daringly, this is all played to the very limit of grotesquerie: apart from the civil servant himself, every character, every bit-part even, is conceived in Meyerholdian terms as a collection of extravagant tics and mannerisms. But somehow, because the style is used with absolute consistency, one comes to accept it as a sort of norm, and then as a jumping-off ground for the even wilder dream sequences, which involve such curious delights as a couple of dozen dwarfs parodying the main action. Real Dostoevsky, as against Piriev's waxworks; and for some inexplicable reason banned, or strictly speaking shelved indefinitely after the regulation two showings in Moscow.

The same with Larissa Shepitko's *Wings*. Shepitko is still in her twenties, and this, her first feature, shows some strong influence from Antonioni; particularly in the second half, where the middle-aged heroine, once a famous wartime flier, now a misfit in the civilian world, goes on one of those long *La Notte* walks before eventually taking off, inconclusively and not very optimistically, into the far blue yonder in a small training aircraft. But the influence is assimilated, and the incidents on her walk are more meaningful, less heavily significant than those in Jeanne Moreau's. Indeed, what happens is often curiously touching: an unexpected interlude of simple gaiety with a tired waitress; a scene in the local museum when the heroine watches some young people looking at pictures of her former self like something from the pre-historic past . . .

In this context the older generation seem at present to have little to offer, though it is surprising to hear how many of them are still working: Alexander Room, for instance, at 75, is just finishing another film. The most pleasing film by a senior director I saw in Moscow was Sergei Yutkevich's *A Subject for a Short Story*, which takes the disastrous first night of *The Seagull* as starting-point for an elegant exploration of the play's autobiographical background. Too elegant, really: the settings for the flashbacks, which are nearly all drawn in, using contemporary graphics as inspiration (apart from a trip to the real Eiffel Tower to establish that this is a Russo-French co-production), are terribly pretty and modish but end by making the film seem little more than a chilly exercise in style. Still, the sophistication is tonic after so much drabness in the more routine Soviet product. And it looks as though that is what is being handed on to the younger generation. More power to their elbow.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

## VENICE

PERHAPS THE TWO most memorable images of this year's Festival were of the Venetian audience surging with wild enthusiasm round Nelly Kaplan as she made her very photogenic way out of the Palazzo after the gala screening of her first feature, and of critics dissolving into delighted giggles when the Brazilian *Macunaima*, sampled in the expectation of more glum peasantry, turned out to be a magnificently lewd and funny fairytale, directed by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade as a sort of distant offshoot of *Li'l Abner* out of *Son of Sinbad*. Any sort of sparkle was more than welcome in the drizzle of grey drabness.



For a whole week, audiences had been submitted to a deluge of mediocrity, made worse by the fact that every programme seemed to be accompanied by yet another interminable short lamenting the gradual engulfment of Venice by the sea. It was depressing to find how many films talked about protest, revolution or alienation without getting beyond the basic clichés. Equally depressing to find that directors young and old seemed determined to wave the flag of significance so unsparingly that one became enveloped in the folds. Alf Sjöberg's *The Father*, for instance, is a fine straightforward adaptation of Strindberg's play, beautifully mounted and with a superb performance by Georg Rydeberg in the title role; but Sjöberg has tried to inject some sort of relevance by prefacing it with portraits of contemporary sages (Darwin, Bismarck, Nietzsche, etc.) which recur at the high point of the action, and has completed the ruin by indulging some disastrously 'modern' animated effects. In much the same way, Ansano Giannarelli spoils his first feature, *Sierra Maestra*, by refusing to let well alone. Inspired by the experiences of Régis Debray, this is a careful, authentic-looking account of a young Italian's interrogation and torture as a suspected guerrilla in a South American republic; but the grainy photography and hand-held realism are nullified by frequent cuts back to his friends and relations in luxurious apartments and restaurants wondering what has happened to him. But enough of the disasters . . . on to the joys.

Japan's flag flew particularly high with two remarkable films, strange, secret and as stunningly shot as always. Slightly the lesser of the two, mainly because of a faint sag in the middle, Masahiro Shinoda's *Double Suicide* is based on a play by Chikamatsu about a tormented triangle of husband, wife and mistress, and mixes its conventions to brilliant effect. The acting is realistic (in the Japanese sense), with some remarkably frank sexual scenes; the settings are stylised in the Kabuki manner, often changed before our eyes by black-hooded scene-changers (or puppet-masters, since this was originally a Bunraku doll play and the film opens with preparations for a puppet performance) who remain hovering like mute, ominous witnesses in the background; and the morality adheres strictly to the feudal code whereby duty rules over inclination. The result is a soaring tragedy of passions thwarted by the bonds of convention, leading to the extraordinary scene of cannibalism in a churchyard (hooded puppet-masters brooding behind the tombstones), after which the two lovers stand on a bridge as she proposes that she jump from one side and he, for propriety's sake, from the other. And the end, with the puppeteers, silent and mournful in silhouette on the skyline, ritually erecting a gibbet so that the hero may complete the double suicide, is a starkly fantastic image of horror worthy of Bergman in his best medieval mood.

Nagisa Oshima's *The Boy* is, on the surface at least, altogether simpler and quieter. Shot in soft, brightly jewelled colours, it explores a newspaper headline of three years ago about a family (father, stepmother and two small sons) who earned their living by faking automobile accidents and claiming indemnity from the drivers. Focusing on the elder boy, aged ten, who becomes the reluctant breadwinner by his expertise in picking the right cars and sustaining just the right level of minor injury, the film is a cool, clear look through the accusing eye of childhood innocence. The boy is willing and obedient, and he loves the parents who force him to do this work which terrifies him, but he jealously guards a private vision within himself.

There is an extraordinary scene in which he decides to run away to the grandmother with whom, he remembers, he was once happy. Only able to afford the train fare part of the way, he stumps purposefully through the ticket barrier of some unknown town, turns down a street for (like Antoine in *Les quatre cents coups*) his first, astonished sight of the sea, and settles down on the dark, deserted beach to share his adventures in an imaginary conversation with his grandmother. Suddenly, shatteringly, he begins to cry; and in the next scene, without fuss or explanation, is back at home and hard at work. Equally extraordinary, his dream of



NELLY KAPLAN'S "LA FIANCÉE DU PIRATE".

himself as a 'man of the cosmos' which he reveals to his little brother out on a snowy hilltop by building a pyramid of snow, crowning it with a red wellington boot (relic of a girl whose death in a car crash he believes he was responsible for), and then, overcome by the futility of it all, destroying his vision and returning home once more to the life he hates and fears. Oshima is barely known in this country as yet, but with *The Boy*, *Death by Hanging* and *Diary of a Shinguku Thief* all due to be shown in London this autumn, he will certainly become a name to conjure alongside Ichikawa and Kobayashi.

With *Porcile*, Pasolini continues his one-man band of metaphysical violence in a visual style reminiscent of the calm, brooding ellipses of *Theorem*. Two stories are intertwined. In one, a young man lives in a volcanic desert, alone and starving, but gradually gathering around him a small band of devotees who hunt down stray passers-by and eat them. In the other, a bourgeois family lives comfortably in Bonn, the industrialist father busily plotting a political alliance with his war criminal rival, while his son talks about joining the student rioters in Berlin and indulges a secret passion for a sow in the family pig-pen. At the end, both young men are devoured by divers animals, and the film closes with dazzling insolence when the war criminal, hearing that no evidence remains of the atrocity, not even a button, cheerfully puts his fingers to his lips and says 'Ssh!' Even the Italian critics seemed to be having some difficulty with Pasolini's meaning, so I won't attempt an analysis on the basis of one unsubtitled viewing. It may prove to be a very simplistic film, but at least it is visually striking, it is often very funny, and Pasolini's central image of the despair bred by despair, or the evil aroused by evil, comes over loud and clear.





"THE SWEET HUNTERS": STERLING HAYDEN

Jancso admirers had better wait and see, but for me *Winter Sirocco* is mannerism run mad, with not only the camera prowling ceaselessly but the characters apparently unable to come together without circling aimlessly round each other like sniffing dogs. The snowscape settings, of course, are marvellous, as are the compositions with Jancso horsemen cantering back and forth in the snow and proud figures prowling in flowing sheepskin cloaks. But somehow all conviction is dead and buried in the familiar parade of Jancsoiana: hints of lesbianism as in *Silence and Cry*; stony-faced women stripping and promptly dressing again. Perhaps the fact that the hero is played by a French actor, Jacques Charrier, has something to do with it. Trailing a sort of Michael Strogoff romantic aura with him, he seems altogether too starry for Jancso's anonymous world, or for this tale of problems of conscience among Croat nationalists preparing for the terrorist activities which culminated in the assassination in Marseilles in 1934 of Alexander III of Serbia.

Hitherto, the name of Nelly Kaplan meant little to me but some unremarkable shorts made under the tutelage of Abel Gance. Surprise, therefore, that her first feature, *La Fiancée du Pirate* (charmingly titled *Dirty Mary* in English), is stylish, witty and extremely funny. In one of those *Clochemerle* villages, crawling with vice and virtue and a plethora of Gallic grotesques, a luscious girl (superb performance by Bernadette Lafont) lives in a tumbledown shack with a black goat, her ancient gypsy mother, and bats pinned to the wall. When the old lady is accidentally killed, and the goat intentionally shot by the witch-hunting villagers, the girl determines to be avenged. She does so through whoredom, ensnaring all the men, terrifying the women, and doing such a roaring trade that her shack is soon a treasure trove of all mod. cons.

Basically the material is the familiar stuff of Gallic sex farce, but perfectly timed, never allowed to carry on too long, and genuinely funny as the whore innocently counters every attempt to dislodge her by being one economic trick ahead of her tormentors. Above all it is a farce with teeth: the last scene, when she bursts in on the Sunday church service with a tape-recorder (one of the benefits of affluence), and leaves it to blare out the intimate confessions of the local dignitaries as she swings happily out of the village and on to the open road, says more about revolution and freedom than all the underground protest movies put together.

From France, *Une Infinie Tendresse*, a remarkable semi-documentary about spastic children: tender, measured and self-absorbed, it somehow manages to give one a new vision of 'normality' as disturbing as Tod Browning's *Freaks*. From Canada, Robin Spry's *Prologue*, an exploration of the world of hippydom, immensely sympathetic and sensible as its characters attempt to sort out the rival philosophies of militant protest and Buddhist retreat. As a final *bonne bouche*, however, Ruy Guerra's *The Sweet Hunters*, kept to the last because its deliberately slow, mesmeric style will

not appeal to everybody, indeed was fairly generally ridiculed at Venice.

A deserted, windswept island, illusory refuge for four people who spend the summer there. Extraordinary hieratic, obsessive gestures as the ornithologist (Sterling Hayden) sets up his nets and equipment, waiting for the birds which never come; as his wife (Maureen McNalley) prowls the island in search of the man escaped from a mainland prison whom she feels sure will come to her; as her younger sister (Susan Strasberg) broods over their marriage, wondering about the nature of happiness and the rich, elderly man waiting for her back in civilisation. Nothing happens; one solitary bird arrives; a derelict boat founders in the shallows; a dead man floats by. Then, one night, the prisoner stumbles into the house for a strange, passionate encounter with the wife and a dispassionate one with the husband, before drifting out into the darkness again to die. A maze of lures and decoy trails, ending in that illusory sweetness in human relationships which comes when people are untouched by each other except on the surface, *The Sweet Hunters* is haunting, unhurried, operatic: a masterpiece or a disaster, depending on how it hits you.

TOM MILNE

## EDINBURGH

AT THE TIME of writing—only halfway through Edinburgh's most ambitious festival yet—the one undoubted success is the Samuel Fuller retrospective (which is coming to the National Film Theatre and will be discussed more fully in a later issue). One is tempted to say 'irrespective of the *auteur* theory', but beside even the widely acknowledged achievements of *Run of the Arrow*, *Pick-up on South Street* and *Underworld U.S.A.* the sort of grasp of Fuller's closely-knit thematic and stylistic preoccupations that such a retrospective makes possible reveals consistent strengths.

Two examples only: *Steel Helmet* and *Merrill's Marauders*, in their different ways, emerge from the mass of Asian war films as highly concentrated statements on what Fuller calls the 'organised lunacy' of war. Particularly interesting are the three films being shown for the first time in this country. Of these, *Park Row* stands apart as a unique expression of affection for the pioneering days of the American press, an exuberant celebration of its great figures and divided loyalties. By contrast, *Shock Corridor* and *The Naked Kiss* probe the sickness of contemporary American society in a highly personal—often deliberately anachronistic—manner. Despite occasional crudity and mawkishness (more in *Naked Kiss*), they are powerful movies and whet one's appetite for Fuller's next project, a film based on his recent book *The Rifle*, set in Vietnam.

As for the new films, it's largely a mixture of documentary, dedication and disappointment. Ironically for the festival's organisers, manfully trying to escape from beneath the weight of Griersonian documentary tradition, one of the first week's most interesting presentations was *Salesman*, a full-length essay in 'direct cinema' by the Maysles brothers. Almost reminiscent of *Strike* in its introduction of four highly professional bible salesmen under their nicknames (The Badger, The Rabbit, etc.), it seems to mark a new maturity in the *cinéma-vérité* movement. With no lack of opportunity for acid humour—a 'consultant theologian' exhorts the assembled salesmen to top last year's sales in the interests of furthering 'the Father's business'—the film-makers have followed their subjects far beyond the easy laughs to show the complex mixture of guile, naïveté and competitive fear that keeps them going. One feels that the technique of total self-effacement has at last ripened into a true style of observation.

In comparison, the other full-length documentary *King, Murray* seems less sure of what it's trying to do. Which is perhaps not surprising in view of its subject—a demoniac ('My doctor tells me I'm hyperkinetic') insurance salesman, seen in continuous action for twenty-four hours, clinching deals, entertaining, exercising and talking non-stop. Although

*Continued on page 218*



# IN THE PICTURE

## The Illustrated Man

"IT'S LIKE WHEN you go into the Sistine Chapel and you're thinking 'By Heaven, this is really it, this is the supreme experience of all time.' And the walls are covered with these fantastic paintings, and you look up and they're above you as well, crowd upon crowd of them, marvellous, perfect, sublime. Except that *there's* God and *there's* Adam and their hands stretch out towards each other and they *don't*—quite meet." Ray Bradbury was talking about *Space Odyssey*. "It's just the same; you think it's going to be the greatest thing that ever happened, the photography's wonderful, the set-up's fascinating, the effects are incredible. And then the computer gets in the way and it spoils all the fun, ruins the Melvillean concept—it's as if you interrupted *Moby Dick* to talk about sardine-fishing. HAL is just a cheap comedian, he wastes forty-five minutes, and by the time he's been disposed of, *Forbidden Planet*, for all its vulgarity, has remained the better film.

"And those astronauts, they're like zombies, no emotion, no humanity. That's all wrong. The men who journey to the outer planets will be like the Victorian in his parlour, with his shadow-plays, word-games, banjo-playing. If they watched dials all the time or ran round flexing their muscles like mice in a wheel they'd go mad in a week. I believe that men in space will be the most inventive home-entertainers of all time. There'll be space-music and poetry of course, but more than these, there'll be holograms, three-dimensional ghosts who will share in their conversations like the wall-television characters in *Fahrenheit 451*..."

I had tracked him down during his first sightseeing trip to Britain, a visit which by something that seemed more than coincidence was occurring as men were on their way to the first lunar footstep. Ray Bradbury is one of the reasons why the Apollo flight appeared as no more than the re-enactment of what has felt like history for twenty years. Just as the stories of Arthur Clarke long ago defined the

scientific method behind each stage of the space programme, so the writings of Bradbury investigated the human impulse behind it all, in language drawn not from technology but from a hot-house of literary resonances in which Poe, Hemingway, Faulkner, Dunsany and Yeats are erratically intermingled with Dickens (one of Bradbury's stage productions in Los Angeles was called *Any Friend of Nicholas Nickleby's is a Friend of Mine*).

Just back from a pilgrimage to meet some 'old friends' at Poets' Corner, and just about to depart for Stonehenge, Bradbury admitted to having taken another look at *The Illustrated Man* when he found it was showing in London. Did he feel it was a successful translation of his book? "If I'd had my way, I'd have changed two-thirds of it. You know, I only saw the script a fortnight before they started shooting and it had knocked around Hollywood for three years without ever being checked with me. It was too late to read it then, so I never have. The Steigers were old friends, and Rod is just fine in the part—he kept on changing the lines as he went along to try to restore it a bit. Trouble is, the film wastes so many opportunities. Nothing could be more filmic than *The Veldt*, which is really about cinema anyway—a setting that changes into anything you want, creates any dream you like. But the film did nothing with this; instead the emphasis is on the parents mooning about with nothing to do.

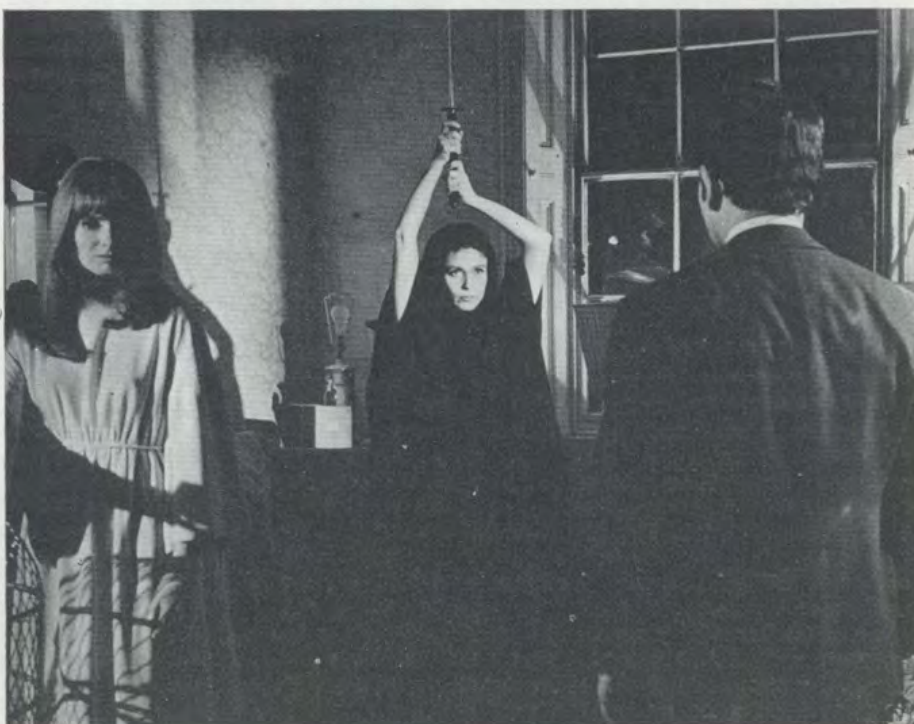
"Still, all I'm really complaining about is that it took eighteen years to get *Illustrated Man* filmed, and it'll take even longer with *Martian Chronicles*. I wrote those Mars stories for various magazines over four years while starving in New York (lived at the YMCA) until I realised that if I stuck them together I'd have a book. And so it all

started. I turned them into a screenplay for Robert Mulligan a few years ago but the project fell through for the main reason that it would be a very expensive film; I now own the script myself and I'm still trying to sell it to a studio. I'd love to direct, and with my friend James Wong Howe and a good editor I would feel halfway home, secure—but I'm put off by the thought of the energy expenditure involved.

"Ideally I'd have two lives, one as a writer, the other as film-maker. I've had the film bug ever since the age of three (I remember I was selling papers for a living when I saw *Fantasia* and told everybody it was the greatest goddam film ever made), and I welcome the advantages of using a visual metaphor to represent what would be ten pages in a novel. But I suppose the basic principle is the same: three hundred separate bits of flesh that have to be grafted together."

It's this process of assembly that seems to give Bradbury the most trouble. He refers to himself as an 'intuitive writer, whose stories emerge from the subconscious'; once they are out and on paper the process of moulding them can take weeks. This went for his screenplays too? Not to be drawn on problems with Huston on *Moby Dick*, Bradbury recalled the effects of collaboration on his new screenplay, *The Picasso Summer* (based on his short story *A Season of Calm Weather*) which was originally to be directed by Serge Bourguignon. "We went through the whole script and agreed everything, and then off he went to shoot it with Albert Finney and Yvette Mimieux, and when he got back it was all changed. We sat through it and what I called my 'moments of truth' had disappeared entirely. I'd say: 'Serge, what happened to that piece we agreed on?' and he'd shrug and say: 'Oh

"A SEVERED HEAD": DIRECTED BY DICK CLEMENT FROM THE IRIS MURDOCH NOVEL AND PLAY. JENNIE LINDEN, IAN HOLM; CLAIRE BLOOM WITH SWORD AS HONOR KLEIN.





c'était trop banale, Ray. So Mr. Bourguignon was replaced by Bob Sallin, who comes from TV, and we restored as much of the original concept as we could—fortunately a lot of it is animation anyway, constructed around Picasso's paintings coming to life.

"Funny thing, it started as a short and then got offered around (Renoir was thrilled with it but we'd have had to wait too long to get him) and all the time the thing was getting longer and longer. Now it has a lush romantic score by Michel Legrand, one of his best. It's going to be quite something, possibly even as good as *Fahrenheit*. You know, most of Werner's troubles with Truffaut on that one were because he thought the film was getting too far away from the book, but he needn't have worried. As far as I'm concerned, *Fahrenheit* has one of the finest endings ever made. And a brilliant ending means a brilliant film." The concept called out for exploration, but Ray Bradbury, characteristically, was gone like a rocket.

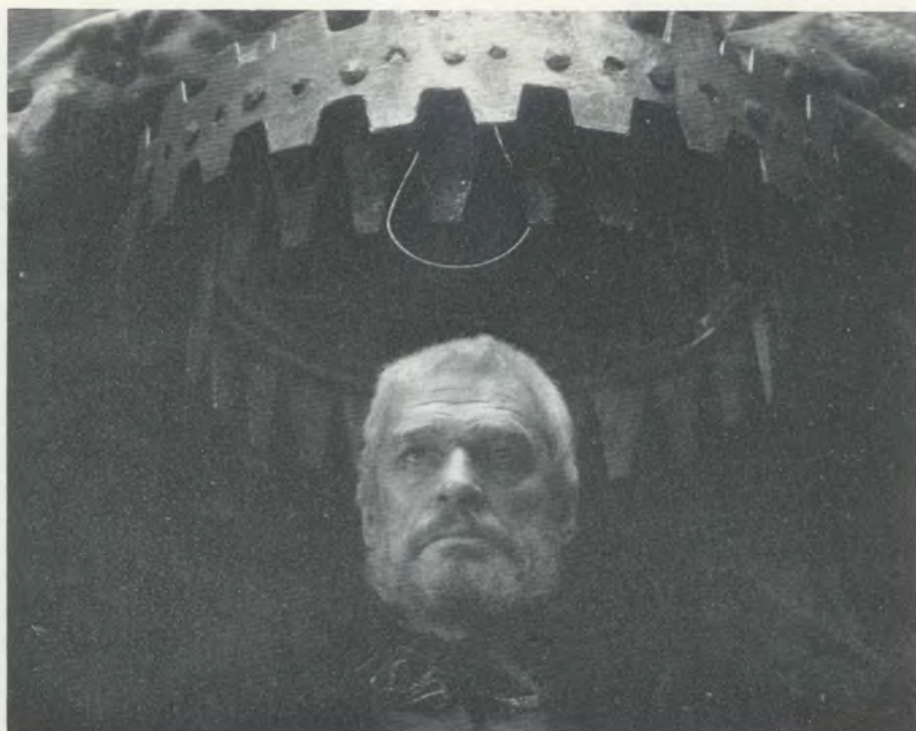
PHILIP STRICK

## Finland

FINLAND, tucked in between the Swedes and Russians, tends to be forgotten, and a glance at recent years' production figures would hardly have provoked interest in the Finnish film industry. From 1963–65 the industry suffered a two-year actors' strike which virtually finished it; in 1967 only three films were produced. Sometimes it is necessary to destroy in order to rebuild; and with twelve films, five in colour, made last year it is safe to talk of a revival. But it is more than that, for the old traditional escapist movie seems gone for ever. Almost all recent films have been youngish, critical and teeming with social comment.

The Finnish film industry's salient features are: no studios, no full-time professionals in any branch, no capital, no foreign market—but plenty of enthusiasm, a growing band of first-rate young actors, some pretty generous State prizes, and lively discussion. TV and theatre are the places where technical and artistic staff alike earn their bread. But the opposition is tremendous—last year there were 320 new films shown, yet Finnish films were way up at the top for audience ratings. Let one example suffice. Väinö Linna, author of *The Unknown Soldier* (to date the only Finnish film to become well-known abroad) had his magnificent story of the Civil War filmed. The book has sold almost 600,000 copies and over 750,000 people had seen the film by this spring, all this in a country of only 4½ million.

Apart from a few funny films, largely the work of the TV star Spede Passanen, most recent pictures have been seriously inclined. Mikko Niskanen, whose poetic *Under Your Skin* was misunderstood in SIGHT AND SOUND some time ago, came forth with *Lapualaismorsian*, about a student drama group chewing over an opera on the theme of Finnish fascism, and last year with *Asfalttilampaat*, about an outsider youth in a small town torn between fiction and reality. The young



PAUL SCOFIELD IN PETER BROOK'S "KING LEAR".

Timo Bergholm produced *Punahilkka*, on the theme of a reform school girl's inability to adjust to the unprotective society outside. Mauno Kurkvaara's *Rottasota* is about youth in the rat race of capitalism. The film which caused most discussion, not because it was good, but because of the theme, was Jaakko Pakkasvirta's *Vihreä leski*, which explored the lonely world of the suburban housewife. But the film of this year is undoubtedly Risto Jarva's *Ruusujen aika*, which is a study of the meritocracy of tomorrow with a profound influence from the prophet Marcuse. Jarva is a man to watch, for although most of his films to date have been shorts, he has won prizes every year.

With so many good films it is a wonder that few pass out into world-wide circulation. Jörn Donner had the advantage of working in Sweden and getting known that way—hence *Black on White* has been seen abroad. Niskanen's *Under Your Skin* has been sold in 25 countries including Devil's Island. But Finnish films fall down badly usually on technical grounds. The equipment is all right but with part-timers dominant in the industry they lack unity of purpose. Nobody pays for film workers to go abroad and study. If they go, they seldom return. Donner is an exception. Finns are notoriously bad sellers anyway and even the truly magnificent new Linna film by the veteran director Edvin Laine has not been pushed.

Within the country more interest is being shown in the fate of the film industry than ever before. Film society membership has passed the 10,000 mark; the State-supported Film Archives are pressing for a National Film Institute with an income written into the budget, in contradistinction to the virtually accepted plan of the producers and owners.

Jörn Donner is to remake *The Unknown*

*Soldier* in order that the theme of war can be reinterpreted for the new generation; there is talk of civic cinemas. Much of this is part of a fight against the bourgeois hegemony in Finland and towards academic freedom.

A new era has begun in Finland since the country turned its first half-century of independence and could look again at the Civil War and the problems that White dominance in the following decades left unsolved. The New Left is vocal and determined, and progress in the world of film has largely reflected this change. Perhaps it is worth remembering Lenin's famous words on the importance of the film in propaganda.

MICHAEL WYNNE-ELLIS

## Forbes' First Fifteen

THE GAP in British film production, it's often suggested, comes at the top: a shortage of people with the impresario urge, the Kordas and Spiegels and Pontis who know how to put the packages together. Whether we have now lost (temporarily) a director and acquired an impresario should begin to be apparent in a year or so, when the first results of Bryan Forbes' regime as production chief of Associated British reach the screen. Certainly he hasn't dawdled: in mid-August, only four months after taking over, he met the Press to announce his first 15-picture schedule.

Scene: the ballroom at Grosvenor House. Atmosphere: relaxed but very professional. Forbes and Bernard Delfont sit at the centre of a long line of directors, writers and assorted associates, irresistibly suggesting speech-day at some rather improbable, Evelyn Waughish school. Forbes speaks of 'the most serious and ambitious attempt to revitalise the British film industry in twenty years.' He thinks



it's 'a mistake to talk about money and budgets,' but when asked puts the cost of the programme, no doubt with deliberate vagueness, at between five and ten million. Pounds, not dollars; and it's a change to hear a production executive actually thinking in sterling. Films will be sold to American distributors individually, without advance commitments and involvements. Punning solemnly and inevitably, and glancing at his talent line-up, Forbes suggests that we are in a sellers' market.

Peter Sellers is to star for them in *Hoffman* ('the first British-financed film that Peter has been in in living memory'), to be directed by Alvin Rakoff. Joseph Losey will direct *The Go-Between* (script by Harold Pinter from L. P. Hartley's novel); Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo are doing *The Breaking of Bumbo* (script by Andrew Sinclair, from his own novel); Richard Attenborough weighs in with Simon Raven's *The Feathers of Death*; Richard Condon is working on a script as yet untitled—for, says Forbes darkly, 'security reasons'.

New directors on the list include the actor Lionel Jeffries, who will film his own adaptation of E. Nesbit's children's classic *The Railway Children*, and Paul Watson (from the Royal College of Art and television) who does A. E. Coppard's *A Fine and Private Place*. Mr. Forbes talks of 'a distinguished debut' for Frank Nesbitt, also from television, who will direct John Mills in H. E. Bates' *Dulcima*. But show business memories run a little shorter than critics', and actually the debut was anticipated some three years ago, when we saw Mr. Nesbitt's British Lion thriller *Walk a Tightrope*.

Also in the package is a comedy, *Forbush and the Penguins*, to be made in association with British Lion and the NFFC, which is an alliance of some significance. The new-look Associated British is spreading its net pretty wide. Its

problems can't, on the face of it, be underestimated: to find new talent (clearly, they are having a go), to win over some of the more established names from their American connections, to find a studio image for the 1970s. Above all, practically, to sell to the Americans, when the intention is plainly to go neither for sensation nor superstars. If Forbes, Bernard Delfont and EMI finance can pull all this off, it will be an exceptional achievement. Meanwhile, as Forbes says, he's on to one sure thing: *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, his last film before his translation to the front office, is bound to be 'the best picture this year directed by a studio production chief.'

PENELOPE HOUSTON

## Who's In, Who's Out

IT IS A coincidence that two directors should simultaneously have embarked on films of *King Lear*, the great gap previously in the screen's canon of Shakespearean tragedy. Shooting on Peter Brook's film was actually completed during last spring, on bleak Danish locations by a freezing sea. Grigori Kozintsev's film, it is estimated, will altogether be the best part of two years in production.

Kozintsev's version is well advanced, and stills suggest a visual style strikingly similar to his *Hamlet*, with strong, stern, wood and stone interiors and cloaked figures striding across windy plains. The only member of the *Hamlet* cast to reappear is Elsa Radzin, then Gertrude and now Goneril. "It will be particularly difficult for me, because I don't speak Russian well enough, and will have to work with a teacher as I did during *Hamlet*." She comes from the Latvian National Theatre; and Kozintsev's Lear is an Estonian actor, Yuri Jarvet, relatively new to films. Although his Cordelia, Valentina Shendrikova, comes from Moscow and the Mayakovsky Theatre, his

cast seems solidly weighted with actors from the Baltic Republics. Exteriors are mostly around the River Narva, with Lear's castle constructed in the fortress at Ivangorod. Kozintsev is working from the Pasternak translation, and the music will be by Shostakovich.

Peter Brook's version stars Paul Scofield, Lear in Brook's 1962 Royal Shakespeare production; although this is emphatically a full-scale film and not a stage-bound translation. Irene Worth plays Goneril, and the cast includes Alan Webb (Gloucester, brutally blinded in a kitchen), Cyril Cusack (Albany), Patrick Magee (Cornwall) and Jack MacGowran (the Fool). The film was shot on a non-epic scale (a budget of just over a million dollars, with a share of the money coming in a grant from the Danish Film Fund), with extras collected from Danish farmers riding their own shaggy ponies. "We are looking at life in cold countries," Brook has been quoted as saying. "There is one theme at the bottom of the play: the comparison between closed and open spaces. And you can take that physically and metaphorically. . . ." Interestingly, it is the first time Brook has himself filmed Shakespeare. And what, meanwhile, of a possible third *King Lear*, the projected one by Orson Welles?

P.H.

## Work in Progress

ROGER CORMAN: To produce and direct *Bloody Mama*, a thriller about the odd escapades of Ma Barker and her four gangster sons. For AIP.

MILOS FORMAN: New York locations for *Dropping Out*, about current anti-establishment attitudes of young people. Original screenplay by Forman and producer Claude Berri. For Paramount.

RICHARD LESTER: 1970 start for a screen version of George MacDonald Fraser's novel *Flashman*, about the later adventures of the *Tom Brown* bully, with screenplay by Charles Wood. Cinema Organisation for United Artists.

JEAN-PIERRE MELVILLE: Back to crime with *Le Cercle Rouge*, in which Paul Meurisse plays a former police commissioner turned criminal, with Alain Delon as his accomplice. Films Corona.

ARTHUR PENN: Western satire, *Little Big Man*, who claims to be 121 years old and the only white man to survive the Sioux massacre of General Custer and his troops at Little Big Horn. With Dustin Hoffman, Richard Boone and Faye Dunaway. For Cinema Center.

FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT: Directs and stars in *L'Enfant Sauvage*, based on a medical case-history at the time of the French Revolution, about the efforts of a doctor to civilise a 12-year-old 'wolf boy' abandoned as a baby in the forest of Auvergne. Films du Carrosse for United Artists.

FRED ZINNEMANN: *Man's Fate*, with screenplay by Han Suyin from André Malraux's novel; shooting at Boreham Wood and on location in the Far East. David Niven, Eiji Okada and Liv Ullmann head the cast. A Carlo Ponti production for M-G-M.

YURI JARVET IN GRIGORI KOZINTSEV'S "KING LEAR"







# THE LILY IN THE VALLEY

Delphine  
Seyrig  
interviewed by  
Rui Nogueira



**RUI NOGUEIRA:** *How did you come to the theatre?*

**DELPHINE SEYRIG:** Because I couldn't think of anything else. Because I was seventeen years old, I wasn't clever at school, and I had to do something. Some friends of mine were in the theatre, and suddenly it seemed a marvellous life so I wanted to start in and work.

*What was the first play you appeared in?*

The first play was . . . two plays. One was a little musical comedy, *L'Amour en Papier* by Louis Ducreux. The other was an *argot* piece by Pierre Devaux. It was very vulgar, but I played it quite unconcernedly because I was very young and had no idea what it was all about.

*L'ANNEE DERNIERE A MARIENBAD was your first contact with the cinema?*

No, I had had a small contact well before that. In New York. The film was called *Pull My Daisy*. It was written by Jack Kerouac and filmed in an artist's studio by a painter, Alfred Leslie, and a photographer, Robert Frank. *Pull My Daisy* was the first American underground film . . . black and white, 16 mm., silent. In France at that time there was the *nouvelle vague*; in America there was nothing, except these two people who had decided to make a

film . . . a short feature without actors. It was played by Allen Ginsberg, the painter Larry Rivers, and Gregory Corso, Ginsberg's friend, also a poet. So I was the only actress, but I had a tiny role. I played Larry Rivers' wife. Everyone came round to my place, started to drink beer, and . . . Anyway, it was made at the time of the Beat generation, before the movement sparked off by Cassavetes, the Mekas Brothers and Shirley Clarke. It was post-synchronised by Kerouac, who delivered his commentary and spoke for all the characters, as though reacting like a spectator to what was happening on the screen. I like *Pull My Daisy* very much because of this soundtrack.

*In eight years you have made seven films with six different directors. Can you draw any comparisons between their respective working methods?*

No, I would find that very difficult. With Resnais, who directed me in *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* and *Muriel*, we worked together over several months, whereas with Truffaut I had only eight days. . . . I met Truffaut one night after the theatre. 'This is the character,' he said. We talked a little, exchanged a few ideas, and then . . . we started shooting. Resnais, on the other hand, I watched at work for months

before shooting began. Once the actors had been cast, he made them rehearse together exactly as though for a stage play. For both *Marienbad* and *Muriel* I asked dozens of questions about my part because I wanted to know how to build my character. Then I invented and invented, and he told me whether he liked it or not. In other words we collaborated very closely. With Alain, one even plans the wardrobe together. Everything isn't set out like so many lines on a piece of music paper, but the preparatory work is enormous all the same. A preparation which prepares the way for improvisation.

*From Resnais' films one gets the impression that he may sometimes not explain to an actor what he wants, that he may simply ask for a particular gesture.*

Resnais?!?! He never tells you 'I want'. I never once heard him say I want this or that. When he chooses an actor he knows why he is choosing him. His casts are very carefully considered. All his 'I wants' go into this preliminary selection, and because of this the actors enjoy great freedom of action—cohesion being inevitable, you see? When you have a scene to play, you can try it gay or sad, whichever you like. Resnais will always say 'Do what you like,



provided that is how you feel the character.' But if he isn't pleased with the take, you go on and on until it is right, changing your approach if necessary. This way he sometimes gets takes which are completely different.

*Where does his collaboration with the actors end?*

I don't think it ever ends. . . . But it begins well before shooting, when he explores the character and takes possession of the actor.

*But does he consult the actors over the choice of takes? The gay or the sad one, for instance?*

It may have happened that I have preferred one take to another, although I can't think of a particular example. In that case, one of two things. Either he agreed with me, or he definitely preferred another . . . and naturally the other one won. He is the only captain on board at the editing stage. I think in fact, as far as my own roles are concerned at least, I have always agreed with him. However, he will always take an actor's wishes into account, especially if the scene to be played is very important to the actor. You can talk endlessly with him about the character you have to create. He is fantastically available.

Alain always tries to put people at their ease, to let them have the objects they like to surround themselves with. The fact that he makes them so comfortable, giving them everything they want, creates such a sense of complicity that it is easy for him then to change an interpretation if need be without ever being categorical about it.

*Is it true that in MARIENBAD, in the scene where you go down the long corridor and out on to the terrace, he used five or six different stages?*

No. There are two shots. One in which I run, arrive on the terrace and am dazzled by the sun, which was shot in a real setting. The other is the long tracking shot with the feathers and the white dress, ending in a bleached-out effect, which was done on two stages.

That long tracking shot was done in one take, without cuts. Only the end of the movement, when the camera comes in on me, was done in the editing. The two stages were absolutely necessary. The carpet was being unrolled in front of the camera for miles and miles as it followed me, until the moment I went down on my knees to let the camera come down on me. It was this last movement he repeated several times in the editing.

I did it like this . . . [she tries to repeat the scene] . . . I don't remember exactly. It was nearly ten years ago. But if I were to see the film again now, I would know how.

*How do you set about getting inside the skin of a character?*

I have to create an entire past history for her/me. If one isn't provided, I create it for myself. I invent it. I can't

work any other way. The act of moving say a cigarette lighter doesn't interest me in itself; what interests me is how to move it as the character would. I think the real reason why one loves acting lies in this conception of the gesture bound by personality. I think that even actors who don't admit it actually play much more than the text and the necessary movements. They act because they are inventing a character. And when one invents a character, one doesn't invent her at thirty-five or seventy years old; one makes her arrive there. One creates a past for her. Actors who deny this deny it because they are unaware of it, but they do it unconsciously. I don't care if they say the opposite. I know it isn't true.

*A director like Billy Wilder, for instance, prefers to let his actors develop their characters freely within a given context.*

American actors work out their characters really thoroughly. They leave nothing to chance. When they do, it is because they are certain of achieving a particular result. Take Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis in Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*, for instance. Their improvisation bursts out every inch of the way, but at the same time, how those characters are constructed! They hang together without a flaw. The actors can do the most incredible things because they have a solid base to build on. They can even amuse themselves by creating gags to amuse us.

When French actors play the fool, it doesn't work out. Sometimes it's charming, more often self-indulgent. When Americans do it, it's impeccable. I would like to be able to bring my own work to that pitch, but it's very difficult: French directors just don't have the same conception of the actor.

I have never worked with a Hollywood director, but I would like to be able to do a film American style. Where they would stop me because there was an awkward crease in my dress, or because the make-up had gone wrong. Where they would be as loving over the photography as they are in Hollywood. It might be catastrophic, but I would like to find out.

Here we say it is hell working with people who fuss all the time. But to go back to *Some Like It Hot* (probably because I saw it again quite recently). Does one get the impression with these people that the fiddling and the making-up has cramped their spontaneity? Yet Lemmon and Curtis were dressed up as women with wigs and everything else. Does one get the impression that they have been badgered out of their minds? I don't get that feeling at all. So I am not against this method of work, although I can only talk about it theoretically. Katharine Hepburn, Audrey Hepburn, Irene Dunne . . . none of these ladies seems to suggest discomfort at having been checked in her work because something was going wrong. They act more than we do, and are

more spontaneous. So I do not accept *a priori* this idea we have formed about a method of work. On the contrary, one should start with as many trumps as possible.

All the same, I don't approve of directors who talk to you from behind the camera. In New York I watched Alan Schneider directing Keaton in *Film*. Keaton had to walk down a street a good distance away from the camera. And as the scene was being shot, Schneider yelled at him through a megaphone, 'No, no, no, more to the left, more to the left, more to the left! lefffff! That's it. Stop! . . .'

That embarrassed me. It happened some time before Keaton's death, and I wondered how he could stand it. It is really horrible to have someone bellowing in your ear like that when you are working and you know the camera is rolling.

This scene I happened to witness really shocked me. I said to myself that if ever I had to work with someone who shouted things at me like that, with people standing in the street all around, I would stop flat and refuse to go on working until I had talked to him. I don't know whether I could stand the Preminger method, although I must admit the results are perfect.

*You have done a film with Joseph Losey, who surely works the American way. . . .*

I only worked two days with Losey. One and a half, actually. He is very painstaking about all sorts of details. My dress, for instance. I came over to London specially to do all the shops with a lady-in-waiting assigned for the job. Afterwards Losey wanted us to bring all the dresses we had found so as to choose one. And it is absolutely right for the feeling of the film although you only see it for a few minutes. I think this concern for detail is part of the Anglo-Saxon character.

With Truffaut I worked eight days, and my role in *Baisers Volés* is more important than the *Accident* one, but François left me complete freedom in the choice of clothes. This is neither a criticism of Truffaut nor a compliment to Losey, simply a statement of two methods of working. In a way I was very pleased that Truffaut didn't tell me what he wanted, because I felt he trusted me. But in another way I must admit I was a little at sea because I was afraid of giving him something he didn't like.

*When you agreed to appear in BAISERS VOLES, had you already read the whole script?*

Yes, otherwise I couldn't have played the part. The love scene between Jean-Pierre Léaud and myself was shot in a room so tiny that even my make-up woman wasn't allowed in. It was very hard going, especially as Truffaut did the scene around the bed in a single shot, I had a lot of lines to say, and I was very tired because in the evening I was appearing on stage.

I am not at all relaxed while filming.

ABOVE, LEFT: DELPHINE SEYRIG IN "MR. FREEDOM" AND "L'ANNEE DERNIERE A MARIENBAD".



So I arrived in Léaud's room completely out of breath to justify my tenseness. To get this I waited two floors below, and when I was given the signal to go, I tore up the staircase. That way I was able to hide my nervousness, and even better, make use of it to give my character more plausibility.

Although my role in *Baisers Volés* was quite short, although we didn't work on it for weeks, this does not mean that I was left to my own devices. François and I were agreed about the character, and that did it for us. And of course, as always, I was creating my own private little film. When an actor performs he is a sort of film-maker, in the sense that he is creating a film for himself alongside the film he is appearing in. Each line he speaks is inlaid with other images, inherent to his character and bearing on why he has become what he is. The accumulation of these phrases, each of which becomes a little film, then allows the actor to merge into the film he is making. In themselves the phrases are only a chain of words, and the words are only interesting if they form the foundations for a house, even if these remain invisible. Or, contrariwise, if they are the house whose foundation remains invisible.

Words are icebergs. You only see the little tip which sticks out of the sea. But under the water... there is all the rest.

My way of working corresponds to this way of thinking. I work by reflex. I don't rack my brains... except when I don't understand. If a character does something and I can't see why, then I must try to find some justification. I try to make the character's development logical, even if it means going off into fantasy. If a director tells me nothing about a character, I invent all sorts of things about her for myself, just for my own use. I envelop her, try to identify her personality so as to be able to live it later.

*Did you know the source for the scene in Léaud's room where you talk about the key?*

Truffaut explained that it came from another film of his, *Jules et Jim* I think, but I hadn't realised before he told me. As a matter of fact I was quite sure that there were a whole lot of references, even in the decor of the room, although I couldn't pin them down. It was very curious; I was perfectly well aware that everything had a reason for being there, but I couldn't make the connections. It was only after we had finished shooting that François explained everything.

*You have been directed by a woman...*

Marguerite Duras? But Marguerite is not a woman. She is a Person with characteristics which may be feminine. During the shooting of *La Musica* we discussed possible explorations of her text, for her phrases have multiple meanings and so lead to an infinite variety of ways of playing them. Sometimes it meant being very intimate, and our discussions were very intimate.

We became very close friends. I would like to make a film with her. Just her alone, doing everything. I should like to see her handling not only the actors and her dialogue, but the images too. To see how she would frame things. How she would choose to edit them. On *La Musica*, after all, she had a co-director, Paul Seban.

She thinks it is a pity they wouldn't trust her on her own, but as a matter of fact she did have some inhibitions about directing. Now that she is no longer afraid she is going to make another film... a much more difficult one in my opinion. *La Musica* would have been perfect to begin on. Just two actors and a hotel. The result could have been astonishing because she knew nothing about cinema and would have done things just as she imagined them, like a child dreaming.

*Your role in MR. FREEDOM was a real surprise. For once a French actress was used in a completely unexpected way.*

Yes, I know. William Klein is an old friend, not of my childhood but of my youth. I have known him for twenty years. I know his mind, the way he functions. I couldn't have played the role for anyone else. With him I joked and had a lot of fun: he is like a brother to me. Usually I am afraid of my directors. But Bill impresses me by what he does, not as a person. I have known him so long we can say what we like about each other, and with him I was able to do things I might never have dared to try with other directors. Which proves that an actor can do anything provided he feels the context is right.

For *Mr. Freedom* I did not construct a life for my character in my head. I did not create my private film. Klein was my film, my life. My friendship with Bill enabled me to see myself in a new light. No one else ever offered me a role like that. Only Bill.

*MR. FREEDOM is the first successful attempt at a comic strip for adults...*

I don't see it as a comic strip, more as a circus. With clowns. There I am at the circus, and for once I am offered a performance with contemporary relevance but which still retains all the fantasy and professional skill proper to the people of the big top. Anyway, I wish the circus really was like that. I would go every half-holiday.

In general, I like everything Bill does. I loved *Polly Maggo*. I don't think people really understood what he was talking about. Everyone thought it was a film about fashions. As for *Mr. Freedom*, it is not a film for France.

*Your latest film, LA VOIE LACTÉE, is by Luis Buñuel, one of the great directors of all time. What do you think of him and of your role in the film?*

There is a difference in proportion between the compositions and the editing in so far as the actors' movements are concerned. Of course it's true that with Buñuel one is more likely to go into raptures over his ideas

and antitheses than over his compositions... We were just talking about an Alain Resnais tracking shot, but it would be difficult to know what camera movement to talk about in a Buñuel film. And if you did speak about one, it wouldn't be for the movement itself but for the weight thrown into the balance by the meaning it expresses. With Buñuel one is involved by the idea rather than by the visual expression of the idea.

I only worked one day with Buñuel. Again I read the entire script, first my own bit, then the rest. I very much regret that I didn't see Alain Cuny playing his scene, because if I had seen how he heralded me at the beginning, I would have played mine quite differently. I don't think I manage to bring the film full circle as I should. I ought to have been there while his scene was being shot, but I didn't think of it. The way I say the names of my two children, 'Tu n'es pas mon Peuple' and 'Miséricorde'... it's bad, bad, bad. Well, that's my business.

*You are going to do Balzac's LE LYS DANS LA VALLÉE on television. That should please Truffaut since there are always references to Balzac in his films, even one to LE LYS DANS LA VALLÉE in BAISSERS VOLES.*

That was very funny, strange even. The proposal to do *Le Lys dans la Vallée* first came up three years ago, and until now I have always refused. I always had Léaud in mind to play opposite me. Then one day along comes Truffaut with the scenario of *Baisers Volés* in which Léaud reads *Le Lys dans la Vallée* and compares us to the characters in the book. Of course I thought Truffaut must know about the project and that I had suggested Léaud for the role. So I asked him if he had heard about it, and he swore he hadn't. So it was pure coincidence, not a gag he was pulling on me. Quite extraordinary!

I am not particularly pro-television so I rarely do any. I agreed to do the Balzac programme because I think it is silly never to do any. And of course there are things which may be interesting purely from the acting point of view.

*Have you any other projects?*

Not for the cinema. However this winter I am going to appear in an Arrabal play, which I should also like to do in New York. There is my ambition—the theatre! I don't really care whether I make films or not. There are few films I regret not having made. I am very happy with those I have done. Each in its own way has a special sort of interest.

---

Faces of an actress.

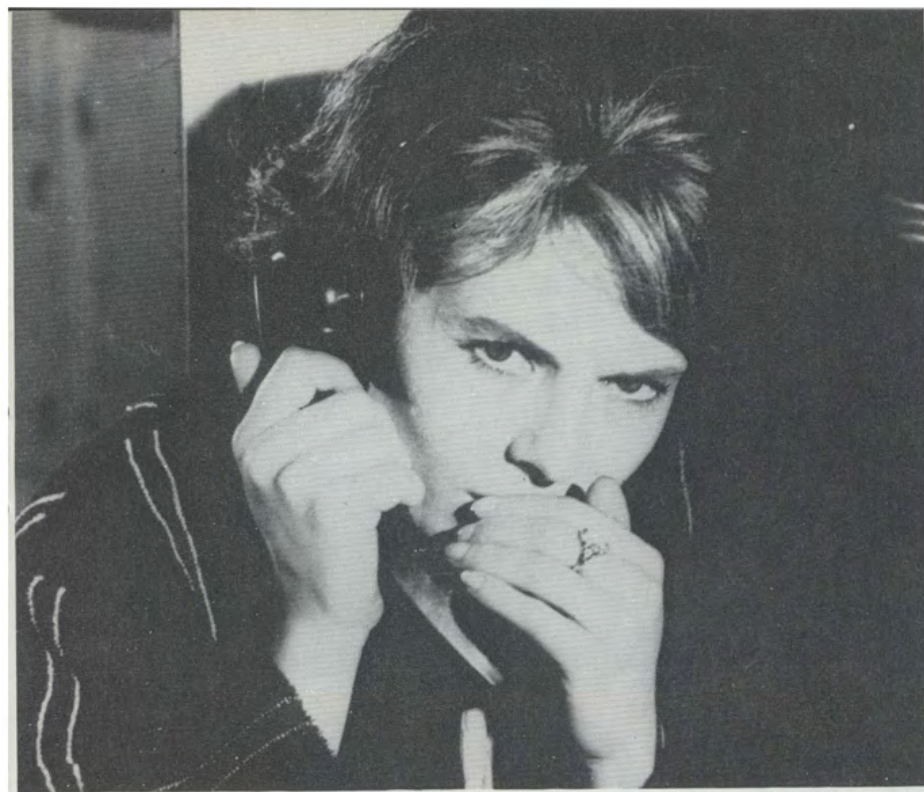
Top: "Muriel" and "Accident"

Centre: "La Musica", "La Voie Lactée".

Right: with Jean-Pierre Léaud in "Baisers Volés".

---



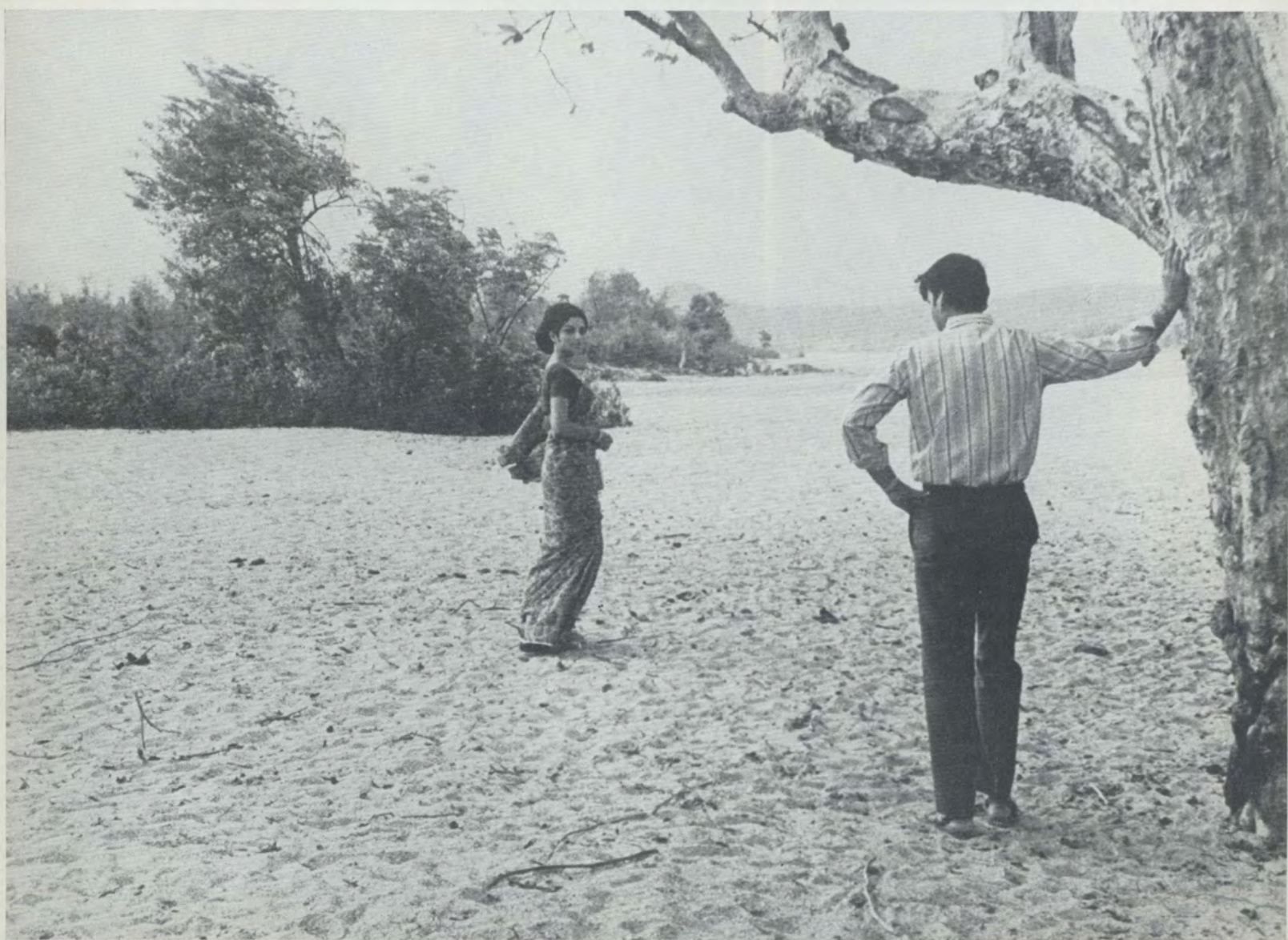




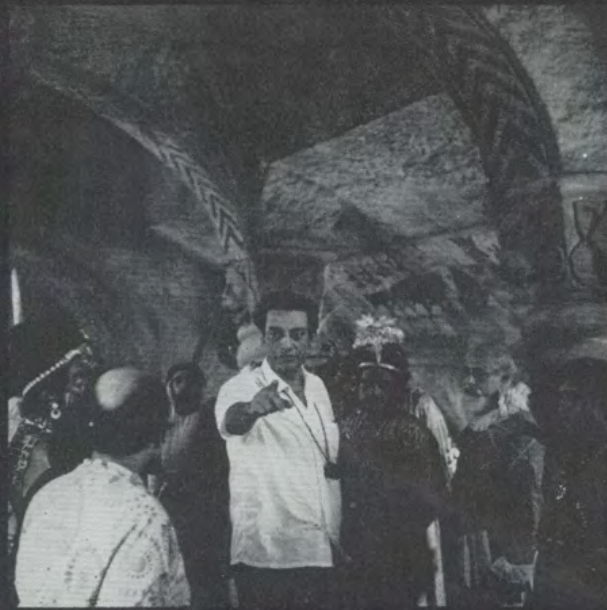
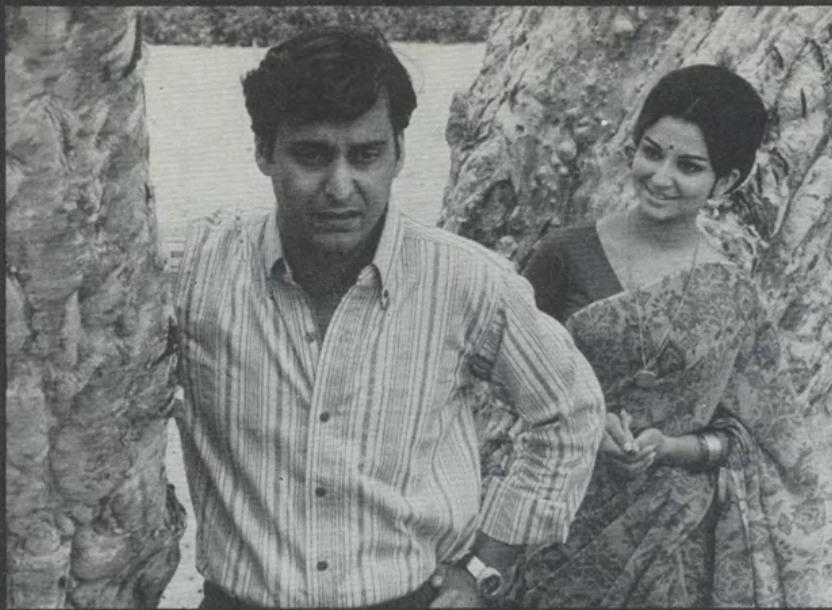


Scenes from Satyajit Ray's new film, with Sharmila Tagore and Soumitra Chatterjee. The photograph on the right, by Nemai Ghosh, is of Ray at work on 'The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha'.

# DAYS & NIGHTS







# IN THE FOREST







"BYE BYE BRAVERMAN": GEORGE SEGAL.

## Stephen Farber

**B**Y THE TIME *The Pawnbroker* and *The Hill* were released in 1965, Sidney Lumet had made his reputation as an ambitious director with an eye for the 'prestige' picture, the socially conscious theme, and the flashy, pretentious trick of composition and cutting. He was granted a sensitivity to actors and a lively intelligence, but most intellectual critics had written him off as a clumsy, hard-breathing imitator, pompous and well-meaning in the Stanley Kramer manner. Lumet's films since 1965 have been no less ambitious, but I don't think anyone could deny that they have been surprisingly different in most other ways. The change in his work obviously cannot be explained by saying that *The Hill* was his last black and white film (almost all American film-makers were coerced into colour at around the same time), but that observation may not be entirely irrelevant or trivial either. It was hard to imagine the director of *The Pawnbroker* and *The Hill* ever making a film in colour—the part of the world that intrigued Lumet, the New York docks, a Harlem pawnshop, a North African military prison, was grim, tough, sordid, coloured a dismal grey. His style, energetic, crude, virile, at least seemed appropriate to the material and the milieu. The best thing about these dark, realistic films was their urgency.

They had little subtlety or grace; they screamed out their Significance in stark, jagged, often irresistible images.

*The Group* represented a remarkable change of style, mood, genre. It was a film about women, its strength was a delicacy and precision of observation, its colours were mellow and nostalgic. The convoluted Lumet style had been radically simplified—the only self-conscious visual effects in the entire film were a couple of 360-degree panning shots around the faces of the Group. Social problems played a part in *The Group*, but a small one; the main emphasis was on the girls' personal lives, and the film had a great deal of tart but quiet satire that was new to Lumet's work. All of his films since then have extended his range still further. *The Deadly Affair* was from a John Le Carré spy story, weighted with a few references to the concentration camps and the immorality of contemporary espionage, but surprisingly spare and low-keyed, and unusually imaginative in its use of colour. *Bye Bye Braverman*, Lumet's first comedy, touches on social problems only when they can fill in the backgrounds of a rather ludicrous quartet of failed New York Jewish intellectuals. *The Seagull* is a remarkably faithful photographing of Chekhov's play. And Lumet's newest film *The Appointment* (filmed before *The*



*Seagull*, but edited and released later) is a bitter love story set in Rome, almost completely without contemporary references, oblique, elegant, dreamlike.

In each of these films Lumet has deliberately been testing himself, exploring new territory, experimenting with both subject matter and style; his adventurousness is quite uncommon among American film-makers. Lumet has even paid attention to the criticisms that his work received during the early Sixties, carefully refining his style and at the same time introducing more complexity into his point of view; the irony is that in spite of this scrupulousness, his reputation seems to have declined. When he made *Twelve Angry Men*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Fail Safe*, *The Pawnbroker*, he seemed to be striving for the kind of heavy 'important' films that could set all of America reeling. *The Group*, *Bye Bye Braverman*, *The Seagull* are smaller, more personal pictures that can only be appreciated by a small group of people with very special interests; but Lumet has been attacked for his growing maturity and integrity by many of the same people who earlier attacked his pretensions. Since *The Hill*, he has not had a real critical success. *The Appointment* has already been well-publicised because of the hooting it got at Cannes this year. I think each of these films has been misinterpreted and underrated, and as a group they stand comparison with any other American director's work during the same period. Especially after looking at the three films released in the last year—*Bye Bye Braverman*, *The Seagull*, *The Appointment*—some continuities in Lumet's work, more important than the superficial changes in style and subject matter, have been clarified.

\* \* \*

Lumet does not write his own scripts, and he ordinarily works from established material (Chekhov, O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Mary McCarthy), so it has always been easy to overlook the personal quality of much of his best work. Even his admirers see him as a purely interpretative director. But Lumet almost always chooses the material that interests him, instead of simply taking assignments, and in addition, he has often made subtle but important changes in his sources to highlight his own concerns. In *The Pawnbroker* the most obvious change, in the style of the flashbacks, seems at first glance like nothing more than another modish trick. But in fact the flashbacks are crucial to Lumet's interpretation of the material. In Edward Lewis Wallant's novel the pawnbroker's memories of his concentration camp experiences were written as dreams that troubled his sleep. It was Lumet's decision to change the dreams to subliminal flashes of memory—the technique had not yet become fashionable—which were stimulated by the pawnbroker's daily experiences in Harlem: harsh, irrepressible pieces of his past that persistently assaulted and even overwhelmed his present life. The film suggests much more graphically than the novel that the pawnbroker is trapped by his memories, drained of life because his consciousness has been numbed by his monstrous past experience.

This troubling relationship of a character's past to his present life is a theme that Lumet keeps returning to. The changes made by Lumet and writer Sidney Buchman in adapting Mary McCarthy's *The Group* are almost all designed to intensify the poignancy of this theme. Mary McCarthy mocked the way in which the girls' Vassar ideals were defeated by their own vanity and pettiness, but their college experiences were present in the novel only by very indirect implication; McCarthy was too busy applying the knife to upper class feminine pretension to attempt a very sympathetic consideration of the girls' betrayal of their past dreams. Lumet opens his film of *The Group* with a marvellous sequence that was not in the novel at all and that alters its direction and its meaning—a gentle, lyrical montage of the girls at college and during their graduation.

Particularly for anyone who is familiar with small Eastern colleges in America, these brief opening scenes—Priss proudly nailing up an NRA poster, Helena sketching for an outdoor art class, Pokey throwing down her books at the sight of a beautiful horse, the eight girls clowning in the

dormitory—wittily capture the exuberance and insularity of university idealism. Because they are cut together so rapidly, these images have even greater pathos and urgency; they seem to be slipping away from us as we watch. We want the images to slow down so that we can savour them; we work so hard to stop time at the opening of *The Group* that the swiftly dissolving tableau of college life becomes doubly memorable. And this is important, for throughout the film Lumet refers to the opening montage by bringing the college songs that accompanied it back on to the soundtrack. The songs are reprised during especially bleak moments of the girls' lives—Dottie preparing to marry a man she doesn't love; the scene when Norine, the outsider, insults Helena by calling her 'a neuter, just like a mule'; Kay recuperating in the hospital after her husband has beaten her—and underscore the disparity between the hopes the girls had in their youth and the settlements they are forced to make as they mature. The point is not simply nostalgic regret for a purer, more idealistic time of life; the film also suggests that there was something naive and insubstantial about the girls' college ideals because those ideals were warped by pride and untested by experience. The constant reminders of the past work both nostalgically and ironically—Lumet has transformed McCarthy's glib satiric novel into a bitter but moving study of life's continuing betrayal of youthful optimism.

\* \* \*

But *Bye Bye Braverman* is Lumet's most personal film about the presence of the past, and it indirectly suggests some possible reasons for Lumet's persistent concern with this theme. Again the film has a warmer, more compassionate tone than its source, Wallace Markfield's brittle satiric novel, *To an Early Grave*. *Bye Bye Braverman* even opens with an evocative memory sequence quite similar to the opening of *The Group*, a quicksilver montage of images of growing up in New York in the Thirties and Forties—a boy posed for a photographer on the back of a donkey, teenagers reading comic books on the stoop of a candy store, a group of friends lining up to see *Shoeshine* at a decaying moviehouse, a small rally for Norman Thomas on the steps of Columbia. The details are sharp enough to imply the intensity and exhilaration that made the characters' childhood and adolescence a rich, shared ethnic experience. But as adults they have betrayed the creative sources of their lives. Morroe works in fund-raising for professional Jewish organisations; Barnett and Holly are phoney intellectuals struggling to find the right word of subtle putdown in little-magazine articles; Felix, the mentor of the group, must lecture to Hadassah ladies and 'answer their brilliant questions: Please, my Debbie wanted I should ask you about Philip Roth'. In the contrast between the opening montage of childhood in Brooklyn and the scenes

"BYE BYE BRAVERMAN": JACK WARDEN, ZOHRA LAMPERT, GEORGE SEGAL, JESSICA WALTER AND JOSEPH WISEMAN.





that introduce the four friends in their present lives, we understand immediately the tremendous intellectual and emotional distance they have travelled in their journey from Brooklyn to Manhattan.

But flashes of what they have lost tantalise us throughout the rest of the film. When they set off for their dead friend's funeral in Holly's new Volkswagen, they play a trivial game, recalling comic strip characters and singing the Fitch Bandwagon theme song—a remarkable sequence that very precisely defines the sort of in-joking, campy appreciation of popular culture that so often belongs to youthful intellectual camaraderie. But an even more remarkable sequence is the funeral journey itself, deeper and deeper into Brooklyn—a lyrical sequence in a world where lyricism would seem to be impossible, a world of overhead railways and Pintchik Paints, ramshackle apartments and shops, young and old Orthodox Jews in traditional dress passionately arguing on the sidewalks, unloading eggs from a produce truck.

The only poetry these men know is urban and crummy. But it is poetry nonetheless; there is a distinctive, pungent flavour to these sections of Brooklyn, a community completely apart from the great city itself and the bland lives the friends have drifted into. And the four men are strangely affected by this return to their childhood. They are suddenly silent as they drive, looking shyly, curiously, yet compulsively at these images from memory come to life again. At many moments Lumet allows us to share their perspective, putting his camera inside a moving car that sweeps quickly past this cornucopia of forgotten life; we almost have to crane our necks to get a good look at everything. As at the opening of *The Group*, we work so hard to slow the images down and see what's going on that we become more deeply involved. Without using so obvious a pointer as the college songs on the soundtrack of *The Group*, Lumet encourages us to connect this sequence to the film's opening montage, and we get a poignant sense of disproportion between the slick, pseudo-hip intellectual magazine and ladies' club world the men inhabit now and the earthier folk poetry that lit up their youth and gave them a trust in their common identity and a commitment to life that they have lost.

For as the car moves finally out of the Brooklyn streets, it passes endless rows of cemeteries and funeral homes. Perhaps this image is a little too heavily symbolic—in their rejection of the roots that gave them spirit and confidence when they were young, the friends have almost literally given up life. Later, in an eerily touching sequence, Morroe walks among the tombstones talking to the dead about the changes in the world since they knew it. The camera moves gradually closer and closer to him as he walks and talks, until we feel he has been overwhelmed by death: the death of strangers, of his friends, of his own idealism. Suddenly cut loose from the absorbing, trivial routines of his failed life, he sees the essentials: in his and his friends' repudiation of their past, they have turned away from what was truest and most promising in them.

At moments like this I think *Bye Bye Braverman* achieves a pathos and freshness of observation unmatched in any American film of the last year. But there is a good deal more in the film that connects with experience not previously touched by American movies. Morroe's wryly comic, tender fantasies of his own death capture the sad poetic masochism that belongs to Jewish folklore, the self-pity that is so difficult to distinguish from self-aggrandisement. George Segal gives his first convincing and affecting performance as Morroe. Lumet is the first director to have understood the vulnerability and ingratiating weakness that Segal could convey; he had seemed trapped in aggressive bully roles (*Ship of Fools*, *King Rat*, *The Quiller Memorandum*) in which he was wretchedly miscast. But the standout performance in the film is by Joseph Wiseman as Felix Ottenstein: a fierce Old Testament moralist who always looks as if he is expecting to smell a rat, a man absolutely overwhelmed by righteous indignation, shrivelled by the bitterness of his sarcasm. Jews in American movies luckily no longer have to be presented as lovable and saintly. Wiseman's Felix Ottenstein is a monster—a definitive portrait of a man who carries moral integrity to a kind of

fanaticism; and even though his bitterness seems largely justified, a result of the fact that he has seen too clearly and felt too deeply, we cannot help being shocked by his irrepressible, life-denying capacity for scorn and outrage.

This much praise makes *Bye Bye Braverman* sound like a masterpiece; in truth, it often looks more like a catastrophe. It is the most damagingly uneven of all Lumet's films. Lumet seems almost embarrassed by the pathos and acid satire of the best parts of the movie, and so he leavens it with farce, folksy Jewish jokes and blatant black slapstick—an attempted seduction of Morroe by the dead man's widow (very shrilly played by Jessica Walter), an incredibly drawn-out, pointless, coy encounter with a Jewish Negro cab-driver (Godfrey Cambridge), a series of pratfalls at the wrong funeral parlour. Lumet's sense of pacing seems to have deserted him, and many scenes go on long past the point of relevance.

I would guess that the problem is that the film is too personal to Lumet and to his writer Herbert Sargent. Lumet is not dealing here with a concentration camp survivor or a group of Vassar girls in the Thirties, but with an environment and people he seems to know intimately, from his own experience. And in dealing with lives so close to his own, it may be that his recurring theme of people absorbed, haunted by a past they feel they have betrayed, became too painful to handle straightforwardly. Lumet doesn't quite express what he wants to express; he seems afraid to reveal too much. He tries desperately to conceal his emotional involvement in the material and the urgency of the theme with Broadway Jewish jokes, and jokes about Volkswagens and kooky, superficial black comedy. What we want to know is a great deal more about the men's past, what their ambitions were once like, what became of their ideals; otherwise the intended contrast of past and present must seem skeletal and unrealised. The film has little tension or momentum. Lumet probably looks back with very strong and mixed feelings to his own youth; in any case, he has repeatedly been drawn to stories about people dominated by their pasts. But in *Bye Bye Braverman* the story may have been too baldly close to him, and he had to try—unsuccessfully, it turns out—to distance it from him.

\* \* \*

Chekhov's plays are often plays of memory, and Lumet's film of *The Seagull* is most touching during the final scene between Nina and Kostya, as they reminisce about the evening two years before when their lives still seemed rich, fresh, open. But their adolescent love and their seriousness about art have been crushed. Nina looks back on her life sadly: "We have both been drawn into the whirlpool. I used to be happy as a child. I used to wake up in the morning singing. I loved you and dreamed of being famous, and now?" When she recites the lines from Kostya's play that she had performed on the same spot two years earlier, Vanessa Redgrave brings a sense of mournful nostalgia to the recitation; in this moment of recollection in tranquillity, before she returns to the whirlpool, she reckons, like characters in so many Lumet films, with the murder of her youthful idealism.

But the strongest impression one takes away from *The Seagull* is its desolate vision of human isolation. Among these people loves are all unrequited, no sympathy or understanding ever reached. Arkadina does not pay attention to her son's play, will not even read what he writes. Nina envies Trigorin's success as an artist, while he is confused by her enthusiasm, frustrated by his vocation, and yearns only for the quiet pastoral life that bores her. Each of these people shows astonishing insensitivity to the others. Trigorin blithely tells the insecure Arkadina of his infatuation with Nina, Kostya ignores Masha, who waits on him adoringly, and at the end, when Kostya confesses to Nina his undying love, she can only talk distractedly and obliviously of her love for Trigorin. The barriers of individual egoism are unbreakable, untouchable. Yet these people pass each other, even seem to talk to each other, without ever listening, without ever communicating.

*The Seagull*, tranquil and melancholy, seems at first glance to be a strange film for Lumet to have directed, quite unlike his last filmed play, the harshly naturalistic *Long Day's Journey into Night*. But although the mood of the two plays is



different, their themes are remarkably similar: both concern a group of people in close contact, but completely out of communication. I have said that Lumet's characters are often haunted by memories; but that is a specific symptom of a more general malady—the inability to break free of the trap of one's own nature and experience. Memory is but one of the obsessions that shades and distorts the perceptions of his characters. His people all have crucial blind spots in their vision of life. *The Pawnbroker* is Lumet's most hysterical consideration of an isolated man who refuses to see beyond his own personal wound, who closes out the rest of the world and lives wilfully, with luxurious self-pity, in his memories. The ending of the film is too melodramatic, but it indicates Lumet's conviction of the extreme horror needed to force the pawnbroker into at last recognising the alien but precious life of another human being. Lumet is an eloquent recorder of egoism and obsession, and seen in this way, *The Seagull* is closely related to his past work.

I'm not sure this kind of project can be judged in quite the same way that we judge most other movies. *The Seagull* is not really designed as a work of independent film art, but as a filmed performance of Chekhov's play; the play is photographed practically line by line, complete with act breaks. And I'm not too interested in arguing, like many of the critics, about the persuasiveness of Denholm Elliott's wig or the appropriateness of a particular camera angle or piece of furniture. Many individual line readings or bits of directorial 'business' could be debated, as in any production of a classic play, but the pertinent questions to be asked are whether

Lumet has treated the play with integrity, whether its themes are communicated poignantly, and whether the performances are sensitive interpretations of Chekhov's roles; I'd say on all three of these points the film is admirable. And it shows ignorance of Lumet's career to say that pretentiousness alone led him to undertake *The Seagull*. Chekhov's themes of the torment of the past and, more particularly here, of egotistical obsession that frustrates love and understanding, are themes that have concerned Lumet too in his best work.

\* \* \*

In *The Appointment*, though, stimulated by James Salter's fine screenplay—a variation on *Othello*—Lumet has conducted what may be his most searching, perverse and disturbing study of human egoism. Federico is a successful Roman lawyer who becomes enchanted by Carla, the fiancée of a lawyer friend. Their engagement is broken when the man learns from his cousin that he spent an afternoon with Carla at an expensive brothel. Far from discouraging Federico, this information intrigues him, and now that Carla is unattached, he pursues her and falls in love with her. Simultaneously, he has visited the proprietress of the clandestine brothel and has been trying to arrange a liaison with the same woman who entertained his friend's cousin. One meeting is arranged, but the prostitute never appears; on the same day Carla has attempted suicide. Federico visits her in the hospital, and perhaps partly out of a vague sense of guilt and responsibility, he asks her to marry him. But after they are married, Federico becomes increasingly jealous of Carla's past and convinced

"THE SEAGULL": JAMES MASON, ALFRED LYNCH, VANESSA REDGRAVE, SIMONE SIGNORET.







"THE APPOINTMENT": ANOUK AIMEE, DIDI PEREGO.

of her secret life as a whore, obsessed to keep the appointment he has anticipated almost from the beginning—a surprise meeting with his wife at the brothel. The appointment is set, but again the woman fails to keep it. While he is waiting, Carla has been rushed to the hospital. This time her suicide attempt has succeeded. But shortly afterwards Federico receives a 'phone call from the madam, who tells him that the woman he had hoped to meet was in an accident but that she has telephoned and wants very much to meet him.

The film is devious in the way it encourages us to share Federico's titillation by the idea of Carla's lurid secret life. We expect a variation on *Belle de Jour*. We have no evidence at all, only innuendo and equivocation; but we eagerly seize at the ambiguous hints dangled before us. The only proof that Carla's original fiancé offers is that a piece of jewellery he had given her was returned to him by his cousin after his visit to the brothel. When Federico goes to Milan to show the cousin Carla's photograph, he claims never to have seen her before—and Lumet gives us no clue that lets us know whether he is lying or not; we must share Federico's uncertainty. We never learn why the friend, Renzo, has lied to Federico, or whether in fact he honestly believed that he was telling the truth. But even during the parts of the film when we want to believe his story, we cannot help being troubled by the sardonic pleasure he takes in playing on Federico's curiosity and discomfort, and the taunting, insinuating way that he insults Carla. Renzo is made up to look almost Mephistophelian, and he seems to be meant as a sort of inexplicable, diabolical tempter figure, a kind of Iago; he is never 'motivated' in a conventional way—which makes him rather terrifying. It doesn't matter whether he's innocent or vicious, sincere or calculating; he is only intended to provide a grotesquely distorted reflection of the feelings of suspicion that are more deeply submerged in Federico.

But the film contains several ambiguous suggestions about Carla that we interpret in accord with what we *want* to believe of her. When Federico takes her home the first time and puts her to bed, ill, her 'phone rings and he answers it; but there is no voice at the other end. He stares at the 'phone in fascination, and we think with him, 'One of the brothel's customers'. A little later Carla and Federico go for a weekend to a small, almost completely uninhabited island not far from Rome. She won't sleep with him, and after he leaves angrily, a young fisherman offers to take Carla out alone that evening. He eyes her lustfully and invitingly. She does not answer. But before

we can determine her response, the scene is broken off. We cannot know if anything happens, but we are tempted to use this piece of half-evidence, just as Federico would if he had been there, to colour our picture of Carla as a capricious, promiscuous woman. At another point, after their marriage, Carla is troubled by Federico's possessiveness, and she is walking sadly along the street when a strange man, obviously looking for a pick-up, comes up and begins a conversation. Again Lumet cuts away immediately, leaving us to puzzle over the significance of the moment—or the possibility that it is completely insignificant—and fit it into our understanding of Carla in any way that we like.

*The Appointment* is a compelling experiment in subjective film-making, though it is not always literally subjective. But even when we see Carla alone, we see her from the outside, without being able to interpret her feelings; our vision of her is never really more privileged than Federico's. Many films have been made about failure of communication, but this one is especially effective because it finds a way of expressing its theme through the imaginative decisions it makes regarding point of view: Federico is the only character whose inner life we are permitted to 'read'; the other characters are all distanced from us quite deliberately. Carla attempts suicide twice, when Federico's actions have become too strange to manage; and we never know why she is so unusually disturbed that moments of insecurity lead her to such extreme despair. The first suicide attempt, particularly, seems to have no motivation; at least the motivation is withheld from us. Carla's death remains an awful mystery. The film upsets us by underscoring one of the terrible finalities we have to reckon with in life—that someone close to us may die without ever really reaching us.

Lumet refuses to provide us with the information that will 'explain' Carla. But the crucial point is that Federico, with an identical amount of information, has not even *tried* to understand her. He jumps to the easiest, most thrilling conclusion because in some obscene way it satisfies him to believe that she has been a whore. I don't think the film can be dismissed as a trick, for it provides plenty of indications that Federico's interpretation of Carla is suspect, and never once gives us a piece of unequivocal evidence. But the film does *implicate* us by demanding that we evaluate Carla with Federico, testing us along with him. And I think most of us fail the test.

One of the film's most disturbing implications is its undermining of our fantasies about romantic love. Movies rarely ask about the psychology of sexual attraction. Love is the one 'given', the one absolute, the one dependably respectable commodity sold in the mass media. But *The Appointment* asks some forbidden questions. Federico is a normal, attractive, successful middle-aged man living a drab, well-organised life, and he is understandably 'haunted' by his first visions of Carla, walking forlornly along a crowded street, sitting in a restaurant completely absorbed in thoughts that he cannot share. These first images of her have an eerie, dreamlike intensity to match Federico's sense of dislocation. (This impression is enhanced by Anouk Aimée's special quality as an actress and personality—the neurotic, anxious woman of mystery, the woman with a past, with a secret.)

Most films would leave it at that, but *The Appointment* investigates Federico's enchantment much more ruthlessly. When Federico learns that Carla is engaged to his friend, he is even more interested—excited by the idea of having a woman who belongs to someone else; and when he suspects that she has a scurrilous secret life, he pursues her fiercely. It is important that almost at the start of their relationship he is told about Carla's work in the brothel. And I don't think we dismiss Federico as a freak; in fact, by casting Omar Sharif, a 'straight' romantic idol, Lumet shrewdly encourages us to identify with Federico. Sharif is such a nice man that his fantasies look as if they would have to be perfectly safe and innocent. Lumet only gradually shakes us out of this complacency, forcing us to see that our 'normal' fantasies and obsessions are more bizarre and vicious than we might want to acknowledge. The film explores the perversities that can colour romance, and particularly the male fantasy of female



promiscuity that so often contributes to feelings of sexual attraction.

The male attitude toward female promiscuity is, of course, ambivalent. On the one hand, Federico wants to possess Carla entirely to himself, and he is insanely jealous of her life—any life—apart from him. For their honeymoon they return to their romantic deserted island, and for a couple of days they are able to imagine that they are alone in the world. In one astonishing helicopter shot that visualises Federico's dream of complete possession of his wife and isolation from the rest of the world, the camera pulls away from the two of them making love on the grass, further and further away until it is high enough to overlook the entire island, and the lovers are merely tiny specks in an uninhabited natural world. But then Lumet cuts to the hectic preparations for a fashion show in the dress shop where Carla has worked, throwing us into the middle of dressing and undressing, legs, arms, breasts, wigs engulfing the screen.

The fantasy balloon is wittily pricked; immediately we are reminded that Carla has had a life apart from Federico, filled with other people and other interests. It is not surprising that after their marriage, Federico refuses to let her work. He wants Carla pure and his alone. And yet he also wants to believe that she is soiled, not merely by a lover or two, but by the casual sex of the brothel. He is suspicious of every movement that she makes, but that suspicion is what makes her exciting to him. This is one of the rare studies of jealousy to acknowledge that a jealous man secretly *desires* his own betrayal. In one remarkable scene Federico makes Carla parade before him naked, as if she were selling her body to a disinterested buyer. He asks her if she likes walking naked in front of men, and although she is confused and upset by the question, he has her turn slowly around so that he can inspect her. This arouses him, and he calls her back to bed.

The largest question posed by the film concerns our failure to deal with the strangeness, the impenetrability of another person's life. Because Federico ignores what confuses him in Carla and simply *uses* her to feed his own fantasies, she is destroyed. Like the characters in *The Seagull*, he is unable to see beyond himself, unwilling to make the supreme moral and human effort necessary to come to know and respect another person. *The Appointment* is filled with indistinct shadows of alien lives—not just Carla's muted, inarticulate, enigmatic anguish, but the Iago-like friend whose serpentine cruelty puzzles and frightens us, an old woman who sits with Federico on a train and tells him the story of her birth, the frenzy of the models preparing for their fashion show—but rather than let any of these inexplicable flashes of life upset our complacency, we choose to identify with Federico, the good, well-meaning 'normal' man, and see the world coloured by his hidden, appealing obsessions. Meaningful human relationships demand *imagination*, but most of us never realise that other people see the world distorted by fantasies, expectations, wounds utterly different from our own. We are unwilling to confront the threatening darkness, the opaqueness of another life, clinging instead to what we know we can manage.

\* \* \*

Lumet has never been one of the great stylists of the cinema. One could not identify his signature merely by watching a few minutes of one of his films. Lumet has constantly tried on different visual styles, and just as *The Seagull* was accused of imitating *Elvira Madigan*, I suspect that fastidious critics of *The Appointment* will detect an Antonioni influence (particularly *Red Desert*) and mock Lumet for his borrowings. But not every director is a great visual innovator. Some of the images in this film—for example, Anouk Aimée walking haltingly along an unnaturally-lit deserted street—are undeniably reminiscent of Antonioni. But they are appropriate to this particular film about obsession and isolation. One sign of an intelligent director is knowing what visual style best expresses a particular theme, and Lumet's images often suggest the distortions of a subjective film, an impression of one man's bewitchment. The colour in this film, enhanced by Piero Gherardi's brilliant, asymmetrical set designs, is among the finest non-naturalistic uses of colour since

Antonioni's own experiments. And Lumet's understanding of actors remains extraordinary. His work with Omar Sharif deserves a little more comment. Sharif is not really an interesting actor, but this is the slyest casting of a lump of Movie Star since Frankenheimer used Rock Hudson to parody the American Dream in *Seconds*. There has always been something rather cold and lifeless about Sharif's romantic image. In *Doctor Zhivago*, *Funny Girl*, *Mayerling*, we may notice this in spite of the directors' intentions; in *The Appointment*, when we notice it, with a start, it is because that was the director's intention. Lumet is the first director to use the blandness and weariness of Sharif's good looks *against* him.

There are many more small excellences in *The Appointment*, and I don't want to slight the importance of the writing and the care that has gone into every aspect of the production. But just because there is so much talent involved in this film, Lumet's contribution can easily be minimised; so it is worth remembering that the film is linked in important thematic ways to his other work. His best films concern the self-imposed traps of memory and private obsession, and *The Appointment* may be his most passionate yet pessimistic plea for the great leap of imagination required to shatter the coercive psychological barriers that isolate us from each other. Lumet is not a religious film-maker in any established sense of that word, but it is interesting that his films again and again consider the possibility—or most often, the impossibility—of self-transcendence.

"THE APPOINTMENT": ANOUK AIMEE AND OMAR SHARIF.

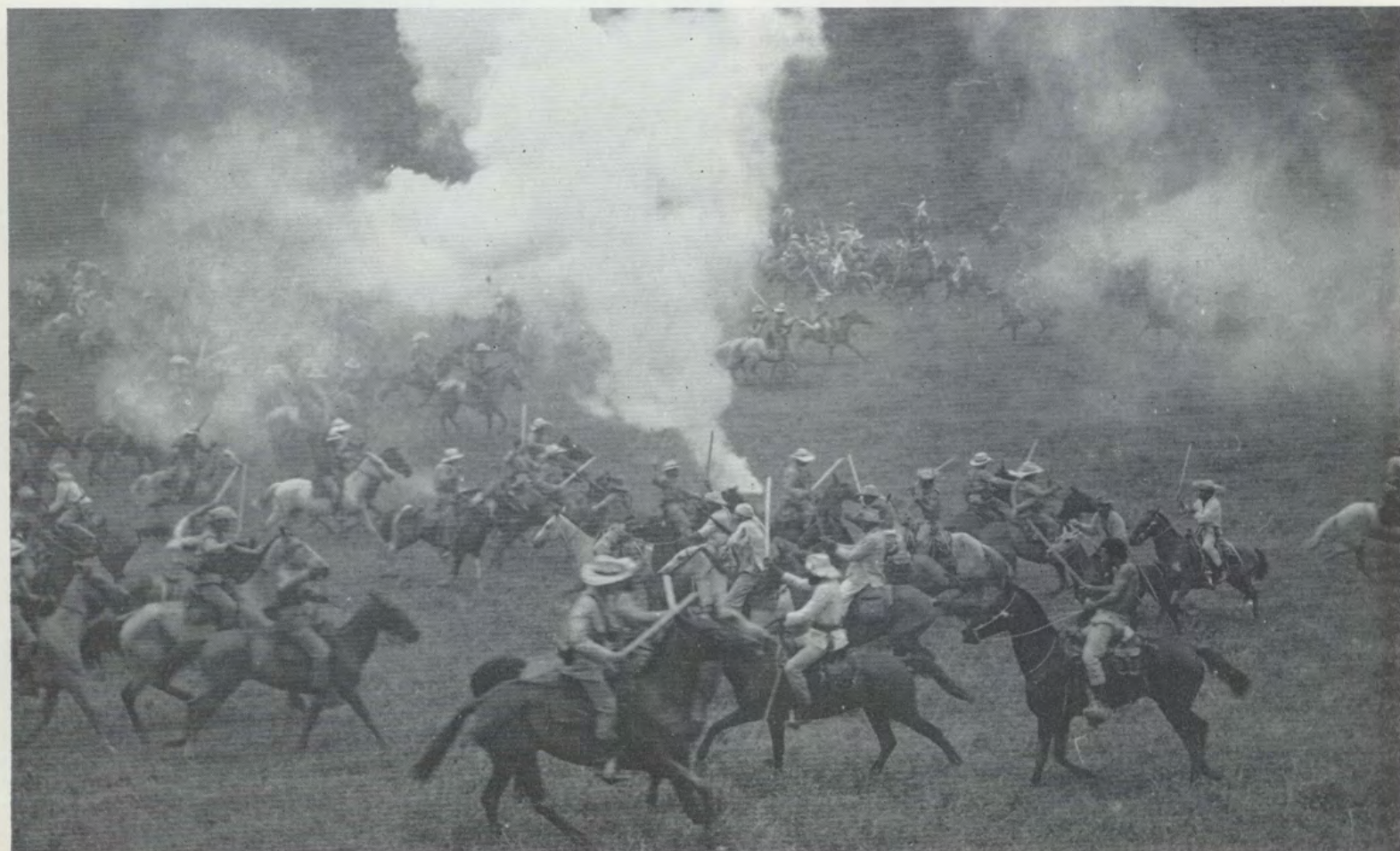






Andi Engel

# SOLIDARITY & VIOLENCE





**T**HE CUBAN CINEMA EXISTS. It has existed for ten years, but is not known in Western Europe. Therefore I am very grateful to the National Film Theatre for letting me organise a week of new Cuban films in London, and also to the editors of SIGHT AND SOUND who asked me to write this article.

The problems of the Cuban film-makers are (a) to surmount their technical difficulties (mainly lack of supplies caused by American blockade) and (b) to break down the reluctance of non-Cuban audiences to look at their films at all, and to make them look without prejudice.

'This country faced crime, blockades, aggression and complicity with its head high. We are deeply aware of what we have accomplished in these past ten years, of what we are doing, of what all that is worth and what it means, and we are ready to go through another ten years with our heads held even higher!'—Fidel Castro, 14/7/69.

The biggest problem, however, has already been solved by the Cuban film-makers. They created a national cinema; that is, a cinema which can exist only in Cuba and nowhere else. So-called 'international' films are nonsense, as is easily proved by the habitual failure of co-productions. 'International' films are as impossible as 'international' communism. Both film and political movements have to be created in close relationship with the world surrounding them. It takes more than a camera and a little red book to make socialist films. You need a knowledge of the people, their history, problems and fears. In short, you must live among people in order to be able to make films about and for them.

That a Cuban cinema exists, which in its best films is able to compete with any other country and which is a tool in the fight for the revolution—a revolution that is still just beginning—was only made possible through the foundation of the Cuban Institute of Art and Film Industry (ICAIC). Just three months after the smashing of the Batista dictatorship, it was founded with government approval in Law 169, which includes the following paragraphs:

'Due to its characteristics, the cinema is an instrument which serves to reflect a point of view and to develop individual and collective awareness. It can also contribute to the development of a deeper and clearer revolutionary spirit and support its creative nature.

The structure of the film industry calls for a highly technical and modern industrial complex with an equally efficient distribution.

The development of the Cuban film industry presupposes a realistic study of the conditions and possibilities of the domestic and foreign markets.

On the domestic scene, it calls for a publicity campaign and a readjustment of the average developed taste, which has been seriously damaged by the production and showing of films of a commercial nature which are dramatically and ethically disgusting and technically and artistically dull.

The cinema must take the form of an appeal to conscience and it must contribute to eliminating ignorance, to solving problems, to proposing solutions and presenting a dramatic and modern view of the problem of mankind.'

The people who actually pushed the film institute through were a group of young intellectuals, among them Alfredo Guevara, now its director, Julio García Espinosa, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, José Massip and Santiago Alvarez. All these had been members of the radical, cultural society *Nuestro Tiempo* (Our Times), which was among other things a film club. In 1955 they made the documentary *El Megano* about the wretched life of the charcoal-burners in the swamps. The film was banned, naturally, but it is Cuba's first 'revolutionary' film.

Only Espinosa and Alea had a 'proper' education as film-makers. Both had been students at the Centro Sperimentale in Rome. At that time Cuba had only one tiny laboratory used for developing newsreel films. There were no cameramen, no sound engineers, and nobody was able to handle film developing and printing. There were no cameras, no cutting tables, no tape-recorders, no studios and no lamps. The ICAIC had to start from scratch. They sent young men to Moscow and Prague to learn the technical crafts. Today



"MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT": SERGIO CORRIERI

they develop and print all their 16 and 35 mm. black-and-white stock themselves, but colour work they have to send to Hungary or Spain.

The ICAIC is the central organisation responsible for all film activities, from production to distribution, from the archive to the cinemas, from the film schools to the film magazine *Cine Cubano* (No. 54/55 was published recently), from the import and export of films to printing them. Naturally this could only be achieved by nationalisation of all distributors, national and foreign, and all cinemas in the country. Now they do show, for instance, American films made before 1960—even Westerns, but only those where the Indians are not the baddies—but they don't pay the American producers.

In Havana there are about a hundred cinemas, where the most expensive seats are about seven shillings. In the outskirts and in small towns the tickets go down to about three shillings. All incoming money stays with the ICAIC. One day admission will be free as the telephone already is, and as rent will be at the end of this year: but only when there are enough cinemas, because free cinema would attract not only film-goers but people simply trying to escape the heat. The greatest innovation, however, is not the hundred or more new or reconstructed cinemas all over the country, nor yet the 1500-seat archive cinema in Havana, but the hundred *cine-moviles*, the cinema trucks which tour the villages and show 16 mm. films to the peasants at night and educational films to the schoolchildren in the morning. These films, such as *Parasitismo*, about the necessity of having clean toilets because of the danger of worms, are straightforward, effective and quite entertaining.

### Three Cuban Directors

EARLY IN 1968, Santiago Alvarez said about Cuban feature films: 'They have achieved less than the Cuban documentary films, as a whole. It is said that a full feature film is more complex to achieve than a documentary. Let's admit that this is so. But I do not think that the achievements of the Cuban documentary derive from its lesser complexity. I think they can be better explained because their makers have gone deeper into their reality and have not let themselves be influenced, without assimilation, by outside trends in the cinema. They have not let themselves be baffled by either Antonioni or Godard. It is not a question of isolating oneself from the international cinema, but, once more, to ruminate and assimilate it with our digestive apparatus.' And he was right, then. But in 1968 came the decisive turning-point for Cuban feature film-making with Tomás G. Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment* and Humberto Solás' *Lucia*.

And since then the situation has completely changed. *Memories* and *Lucia* are not only extraordinary films in them-



selves. Here, finally, the Cuban film-makers achieved in their fiction films what Alvarez had already done with his documentaries: a fusion of their political ideas and a modern film form. Achieved, too, in a film industry only nine years 'young'. The West German film-makers needed nearly twice as long when they had to start afresh like the Cubans, and even then the strongest impulses did not come from Germans but from two foreign directors, the Yugoslav Vlado Kristl, and the Frenchman Jean-Marie Straub.

Because of their fundamental importance for all future film-making in Cuba, I'd like to discuss the work of Tomás G. Alea and Humberto Solás, and that of Santiago Alvarez, who for me is the Cuban film-maker. To choose these three is not so much a value judgment; partly it is because I haven't seen all new Cuban films, and partly because it is no use trying to mention everybody in three lines apiece. Besides, trying to be objective is futile anyhow.



**Tomás Gutiérrez  
Alea**

Alea, born in 1928—which makes him one of the older men in the ICAIC—is a lawyer by education. After getting his degree in Havana he went to the Centro Sperimentale in Rome. He made the first long film after the success of the revolution, *Historias de la Revolucion*, which could still be developed and printed in New York before the blockade came into operation. *Historias* belongs, like Espinosa's *Joven Rebelde*, in that group of films made shortly after the revolution. It is easy to understand why they were made, but they really are a bit slow and laborious in getting to the point, which was probably necessary in order to preserve a sort of romantic revolutionary spirit in the people. It was only in 1966, with *Manuela*, that Solás was able to use the subject of guerrilla fighting in the Sierra Maestre and turn it into a film.

In his early documentary work (*Esta Tierra Nuestra*, *Asamblea General* and *Muerte al Invasor*), Alea already showed an ability to cope convincingly with subjects from actuality and to handle them in a new and powerful way. Two of his early feature films (*The Twelve Chairs*, *Death of a Bureaucrat*), on the other hand, are very funny, but funny in a sort of custard-pie-throwing way. In *The Twelve Chairs*, based on the Russian novel, he tells the story of a chase after some jewellery hidden in one of twelve identical chairs, which affords him the opportunity to make some refreshing observations on the post-revolutionary time. He is able to mock the bourgeoisie, the American way of life. He is even able, in a very careful way, to make sarcastic allusions to the great masses of revolutionaries popping up literally everywhere in Cuba—after the revolution, that is. But on the whole it is a film which could have been made by any second-rate director in Spain or Italy. Not that it is a bad film, or a boring or stupid one; but like *Death of a Bureaucrat* it is an easy one. Everybody likes it when a fat bourgeois sweats through the countryside and has to humiliate himself to recover some loot. And everybody loves attacks against everyday bureaucracy. But, as Alea himself showed in *Memories*, the problem of the 'bourgeois counter-revolutionaries' is not really such a funny one, and bureaucracy can't be attacked merely by laughing one's head off in the cinema.

In 1964, Alea made his very strange *Cumbite*, which has not much in common with his other features and is one of the few ICAIC films not set in Cuba. In style *Cumbite* is more

like his early documentaries such as *Esta Tierra Nuestra*. Set in Haiti and dealing with a village feud over water supplies, it is a slow and touching film with a very simple political message which naturally was intended to appeal more to the Cuban people of 1964 than to the fictitious Haitian peasants: UNITED WE WIN! And I am sure everybody got that message. With *Cumbite* Alea showed his hand for the first time. He shows that he is able to take his time to describe observations calmly, able to tell a story with a strong political impact in his own form and not a borrowed one. *Cumbite* is a great step forward in his development, although one can probably see that only after having seen *Memories of Underdevelopment*.

*Memories* is, so to speak, Alea's and the ICAIC's first full length feature film. It is their *Beau Serge*, in the sense that since *Memories* Cuban feature film-making isn't the same any more. Before *Memories* one could say, 'Considering it was made in Cuba . . .' Now one can no longer say that. With *Memories of Underdevelopment* Alea has begun to act upon what he once said: 'I am a Cuban and I live in the epoch of Fidel, that's a chance to exploit.'

Mao Tse Tung asked in 1963: 'Isn't it absurd that many communists are enthusiastic about promoting feudal and capitalist art, but not socialist art?' It is indeed. But with his fifth film Alea answered that question correctly. *Memories of Underdevelopment* is not only a film which could only have been made in Cuba (and not merely because of Florida and the October crisis); it is for the first time the fusion of the political and philosophical thought of the Cuban citizen Alea with the up-to-date ideas of the artist Alea, who does not need to borrow from Buñuel or Monicelli but is now able to make films which are completely and solidly his own.

Alea's film has, like all interesting films, several subjects. One is the writer who has nothing to write about, less because he is untalented—anybody can be a writer if he has a subject he really feels strongly about—than because Sergio, the bourgeois house-owner who lives off a sort of rent paid by the Cuban government, is not able to take part in the life going on around him. Sergio is the classic outsider; and as Alea says, a state which wants to stay alive cannot afford a large number of outsiders among its citizens. There is a remarkable scene in the film set during the October 1962 crisis. Cuba prepares for any attack or invasion which might happen; all over the country feverish activity is going on to organise the national defences. Sergio stands on the verandah of his luxurious apartment in Havana in the early hours of the morning, watching through binoculars as heavy armoured cars and trucks transporting cannon drive by, while opposite the house a group of militia are slowly hauling two anti-aircraft guns on to the roof of a house. And this—while the people prepare to fight, the outsider looks at them through binoculars—says all there is to say.



**Humberto Solás**

Tomás G. Alea's development followed the well-known pattern. An academic with a degree goes to a film school and then starts in a new company with a few other directors under contract. So he gets one assignment after the other, and after several shorts and features he finally comes up with an impressive film. If Alea's development can therefore be called a 'European' one, Humberto Solás' is a Cuban one.

Solás, born in 1942, wanted to become an architect. I find this interesting, because for me the only art form one can (if one wants) compare to film-making is architecture. Not



only because costs and the number of people involved are about the same, but also because basically the architect and the film-maker face the same problems: they don't want to go the secure, traditional way, and they need considerable sums of money from people who are usually conservative. Anyhow, Solás did not become an architect. He entered the ICAIC as an assistant, working on the newsreels and later on *Popular Encyclopaedia*. In 1966, after several documentaries as scriptwriter and director, he made the medium-length feature *Manuela*, which brought him a good deal of attention abroad and which Marcel Martin called 'un chef-d'oeuvre'. In *Manuela* there comes a sentence which must be quite a shock to most would-be revolutionaries in Western Europe and the U.S.: 'The first thing a revolutionary must be is disciplined.' Then he submitted the script of *Lucia* to the ICAIC, and in 1967 started work on that *tour de force*. *Lucia* is a triumph for two reasons: (a) it shows that Solás is one of the important film-makers, and (b) it shows that the educational system of the ICAIC is among the best in the world.

*Lucia* is not a difficult film to look at, which probably makes it less important to some critics. It is violent, emotional, but not sentimental. It is true. It fulfils what Edmundo Desnoes, the author of the novel *Memorias del Subdesarrollo*, wrote: 'To be authentic, or to try to be, and to exist for others is the only thing which justifies a work, a life.' There are not many films about women made by men (or for that matter, films about women made by women). But with Solás one really feels that he makes observations of significance without being sentimental or enamoured of the leading lady. In our contemporary cinema it is still the male hero the audience is supposed to identify with. A completely relaxed, natural approach to the description of women has seldom been achieved. Usually directors are either too much or not enough involved. I like, therefore, the way Solás shows his three Lucias. He does it much more straightforwardly and convincingly than *Cléo de 5 à 7*. Where Agnès Varda has to use gags and gimmicks, Solás shows faces and people.

*Lucia 1895*, the first episode of the film, tells the story of a girl who falls hopelessly in love with a Spanish informer, and eventually leads him to her brother who, with a group of nationalists, is fighting against the Spanish occupation and has a hideout in the mountains. After the brother and his comrades are killed by the occupation army, she becomes half-crazed, with only one idea in her head: to avenge her brother and the humiliation she suffered from her lover. In a stunning scene set in the main square of the provincial town, she literally cuts him up, thus illustrating two things: that it is very hard to stop being a private person who wants to love, who wants his small share of life's happiness, while also being involved with a revolutionary movement; and that brutal oppression of a revolutionary movement never achieves the desired result. In Lucia's case, though she acts as a hurt and humiliated woman, she helps the revolution by settling her own account in killing the Spanish informer.

*Lucia 1933* tells the story of the overthrow of the Machado regime, and of the bourgeois republic afterwards which forced sincere revolutionaries to take up arms again to fight a new corrupt system; a fight which ended only in 1959 with Fidel Castro's triumph. Lucia is a bourgeois girl who falls in love with and later marries a revolutionary terrorist. She is unable to accept everything he does, but she stays with him because—again very personal—she loves him rather than her country. And as in 1895, only after the death of her husband (the 1895 brother) does she change; and though it is not shown, one feels that Lucia is not going to behave like a madwoman but is going to work in some clandestine revolutionary organisation, and will in the end be one of the victors.

The contemporary Lucia is no longer bound or hindered by traditions or attitudes within herself, like Lucia in 1895, nor does she live in an oppressed society like Lucia 1933; but she happens to marry a young worker who, though he supports the revolution ('What are the counter-revolutionaries going to think?'), is not willing to let the revolution enter his family life. Which means, very simply, that no young

teacher from Havana should be alone with his beautiful young wife to flirt with her. So Lucia again has to make her own decision: and, for the first time unprompted by tragedy, she does. Having learned how to write, she is able to show that she is a person, not merely a married woman. So she writes 'I am going to leave you,' and goes back to work. . . .

It has been said, even by some members of the ICAIC, that the film—especially the first part, *Lucia 1895*—is too long. To that I can only quote what Picasso (?) said to a lady who complained that in a picture by Cézanne of a man in a white shirt one arm was painted longer than the other: 'Madam, an arm as well painted as this one can never be too long.' I enjoyed every second of *Lucia*, because it is one of those rare long films where one really does begin to get deeply involved, where the film stops being flat, flickering shadows on the screen and becomes a solid piece of life. So Humberto Solás has become an architect after all, though not of houses.

It is important that Solás did not finish with the tragic ending of the 1933 episode, but in a bold sweep included Cuba's problems of today. I don't think it damages the construction of the film to have two sad historical episodes and one rather funny contemporary one with an eventual happy ending. After all, some things have changed since the revolution, so why the hell shouldn't he talk about them? Also, too much sadness leads only to weeping, and too much weeping leads only to resignation. And Cuba has only two enemies: resignation in its citizens, and the American imperialists. Moreover, Solás is not a yes-man for his state or the government, as so many Russian film directors had to be. He sees his own and his friends' obligation as much deeper than simply attending campaigns to increase sugar production.

'When the Cuban film-makers have once and for all caused the collapse of the hierarchism to which we have been subjected for years, and when we can also provoke in the field of aesthetics this phenomenon of inversion which has already happened with political ideas, our work will have arrived at the place it is historically destined to reach. Relations between art and the revolution will then no longer be a facile and useless mechanical expression of the established order, but the dynamic reflection of a social and cultural structure which enriches and which in some ways depends on aesthetics.'



**Santiago Alvarez**

'The revolution made me a film-maker,' said Santiago Alvarez to the audience at the National Film Theatre on July 16th, 1969. And a damn good one too. Before the revolution Alvarez, born in 1919, was in the administrative department of the country's television service, where he 'never touched a single film.' He studied literature and philosophy at Havana University. In June 1960 he became director of the ICAIC's Latin American newsreel, and since then he has made one *noticiero* a week, which together with his other documentaries brings his score of films to about 500. These *noticieros* are different from the kind of newsreel we have in Europe, the kind which tries to show everything and actually manages to show nothing (which is very convenient in political issues). Often the ICAIC newsreel is about one topic. If there are several subjects, Alvarez always links them together as a *film* and not as a pot-pourri. Although the ICAIC is a member of an exchange scheme of newsreel footage from all socialist countries, Alvarez doesn't make



much use of that material. He prefers, both in his newsreels and in his documentaries, to use material shot by himself or other Cubans, and if he can't get that, he uses stills, newspaper cuttings, posters, sketches, diagrams, anything suitable in other words. He also prefers printed to spoken words, and music to any words.

In making one film a week (there has not been a single week since June 1960 when the *noticiero* did not appear) as well as the other documentaries for which he is internationally famous, Santiago Alvarez is probably the fastest film-maker around. His obituary on Che Guevara, *Hasta la Victoria Siempre*, was made in 48 hours ('We didn't go to bed, naturally') because it had to be ready for a mass meeting in Havana. *L.B.J.*, 18 minutes long, a satirical montage about violence in the United States—already a tough undertaking purely from the technical point of view of editing, not to mention problems of construction and form—was finished in a fortnight. No wonder that even the speedy Jean-Luc Godard is impressed and called Santiago Alvarez the best documentary film-maker. But perhaps Godard sees some of his favourite techniques in Alvarez' films, and is further impressed that one really can make films for workers without having to lose one's political impact. And that is really the greatest thing about these agit prop films by this brother to Dziga Vertov, that they appeal literally to everybody, though naturally for different reasons.

The Cubans, and Santiago Alvarez especially, feel solidarity with all the small nations who are fighting for their independence, like Vietnam and Laos, like Angola and Mozambique. Consequently, Alvarez' main topic is 'the struggle of the undeveloped and small peoples for their human dignity.' And since he is militant, he believes in violence. His work fits the words of Enrique Pineda Barnet, the director of the documentary on Frank Pais, *David*, who said: '... to show the necessity of violence to end violence, the armed struggle as the only way against aggression, exploitation and oppression of peoples.' *Solidarity and violence*, that's Santiago Alvarez.

My favourite Alvarez film is *Hanoi, Tuesday the 13th of December*. He shot it in 1967 in North Vietnam with his cameraman Ivan Napoles. The title refers to the date of their arrival in Hanoi, when the American bombers were still dropping napalm on areas inhabited by civilians. *Hanoi* has, like all his descriptions of people terrorised by war, a very simple and moving rhythm. It is the rhythm of life: life, the normal, the beautiful, the quiet, the funny. He shows everything very directly, very simply: people posing for a souvenir picture, a man buying drinks, a woman carrying straw and wiping her feet dry, girls cycling by. And then suddenly all that is wiped away. From a close-up of the hand of a young dancer he cuts brutally to the American Phantoms; less brutal, however, than the shock the Vietnamese people get when the bombs drop on their villages. Again he shows the people: a girl completely stunned by the attack, some firemen trying to put out fires in shattered huts, an old woman feeding a little dog. And with the mounting emotion he combines the political message: *EL ODIO EN ENERGIA!* (Hate into energy!).

Though his films hit every audience like a hammer, nothing happens. They still remain sitting there, maybe getting angry, maybe starting to weep, and go silently home after the film is over. This must be the most maddening part of film-making for Alvarez. Although he brings off the most powerful of political films, the audience still remains an audience; that is, passive. Only once, he told me, he had another kind of audience. When he showed his films in Merida during a festival, the mostly student audience stormed out of the cinema and started a demonstration which ended in heavy clashes with the police. Films have never triggered off a revolution, perhaps not even an uprising. The famous Russian 'revolutionary' films were all made *after* the Revolution. What revolutionary films—if you want to call them that—can do, or all they can do, is to change the attitude of people, but slowly, very slowly. They might prepare the ground for a revolution like—I hope—in Brazil at the moment, but again so slowly. People die in that time.

"HANOI, TUESDAY THE 13th".





# SHIP CELS

## ON THE WAY OUT?

Neville Hunnings

UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, it was thought that film censorship was like the laws of the Medes and the Persians—immovable and immutable. Even the few countries which did not have such a thing were not altogether immune, as we learnt from evidence given recently in a Belgian court revealing that at least one leading Brussels cinema appointed an unofficial official censor to its staff to preview newly programmed films to ensure they would not fall foul of the police—not that this prevented a prosecution in the case in question.

But times are not what they were. Film censorship is actually beginning to be abolished. And not only that: laws prohibiting pornography are also being repealed, *mirabile dictu*. Indeed the two seem to go together; for it seems quite clear that even though censors may restrict films for reasons of politics or good taste, it is sex which makes their wheels go round. Once sexual taboos fall, censorship falls with them, and even the new taboos arising to take their place (particularly, anti-racism) are insufficient to resuscitate it.

The countries in which the dramatic changes are occurring are Denmark and Sweden (but not Norway, and certainly not Finland), Holland and the USA. The taboos are indeed down in Britain, but here regulation of the arts and information media is paternalistic rather than liberal, and the authorities only give up their powers of discretionary control when overcome by the death wish (theatrical censorship, for instance, would probably not have been abolished last year if the Lord Chamberlain had not wanted to give it up) and not for libertarian sentiment or rational conviction that these no longer fulfil a useful social function.

Indeed, with the courts busily extending the obscenity laws to cover advocacy or description of immoral conduct (whether such conduct be lawful or unlawful) such as drug-taking, violence and the publicising of prostitutes and their availability (but without the scabrous descriptions to be found in Harris' eighteenth century List of Covent Garden Ladies), the situation is a far cry from the US Supreme Court's steady whittling down of censorship on the specific ground of freedom of speech. In Scandinavia (which is used here to mean Sweden and Denmark only), matters have gone much further, for there the legislative and judicial moves seem to have the general backing of the citizenry, old as well as young, square as well as drop-out, and are not simply the result of efforts by a minority of articulate reformers in the seats of power as in the USA and, potentially, in Britain.

But the trend towards abolition or liberalisation of censorship is appearing much wider afield. The Dutch, who have much in common with the Scandinavian way of life, have (apparently out of the blue) just produced an official report recommending the abolition of film censorship for adults. Moreover the report contains the first official examination of whether film censorship conflicts with the freedom of speech provision of the European Convention on Human Rights, a provision which binds Britain as well as most other West European countries.

Even such well entrenched censorship systems as the Indian and the French show signs of change. Towards the end of de Gaulle's presidency, there were signs in official circles of a change of attitude, of an interest in making quite fundamental restrictions in the function of film censorship; and these signs have continued since—in ministerial circles, in the C.N.C. and among the professions. The possibility of abolition is no longer such an unthinkable *événement* as it would have been even two years ago.

The Indian Committee—the first appointed specifically to consider film censorship—has followed its own predictable and idiosyncratic way. It even had the brainwave of distributing detailed questionnaires to the public

asking for reactions to specific types of film and censorial practices. But the main controversy has centred on the almost symbolic rule of the Indian censors forbidding kissing in Indian films. The prohibition does not apply to foreign films (a double standard reminiscent of the old European and American censorship practice of permitting 'natives' to appear naked), and this has been the cause of much complaint in professional circles. It was thought possible that the Committee would propose abolition of the whole 'no kissing' rule; and that is precisely what it has done in its report (which I have not yet seen) submitted in August. But it went further still and unexpectedly recommended permitting the portrayal of nudity on the screen whenever this is necessary for aesthetic reasons or for the understanding of the film.

But however revolutionary the Khosla Report proposals are in the Indian context, the truly shattering development is the complete abolition of film censorship for adults, which is a Very New Thing. To a lawyer, the way this has been done in the USA is fascinating, for the changes are almost entirely judge-made and follow a particular legal logic in their development. On the other hand, the Scandinavian changes are deliberate social developments in tune with the prevailing, highly responsible social attitudes. The reports which have been issued—the Danish reports on pornography (1966) and film censorship (1967) and the two Swedish reports on film censorship (1967 and 1969)—examine the pros and cons of censorship with a thoroughness and level-headed practicality which contrasts markedly with the single-minded idealistic reliance on theoretical principles of liberty evinced by the US Supreme Court.

When adult film censorship came to an end in Denmark on July 1st 1969, that was the first time that any parliament had ever deliberately abolished it. And, as if to emphasise the bi-partisan popular support for the measure, there was a general election and change of government between the introduction of the abolition bill and its final approval. But the ground had been prepared very thoroughly. The prohibition against pornographic books had been removed the previous year, with the result that several of the leading pornographers found themselves in financial difficulties; and the remaining prohibition against pornographic pictures was removed this last July coincident with the removal of film censorship.

Danish film censorship has always been exercised very liberally, even in the 1930s, especially in sexual matters. It is symptomatic that the film which gained its freedom on July 1st was not *Histoire d'O* or *Flaming Creatures*. It was *Wild Angels*, which had been banned, after much controversy, for much the same



reasons that the British Board of Film Censors banned *The Wild One* many years ago (a ban lifted only this year), namely fear of encouraging imitative behaviour among groups of asocial young motorcyclists. Now, the only repressive group left in Denmark as regards films seems to be the 'protest movement' which, taking a leaf out of the book of the British fascists in 1950, organised violent demonstrations against John Wayne's Vietnam film *Green Berets*, forcing the distributor to withdraw the film.

Sweden seems to have achieved much the same results as Denmark in the obscenity field without legislation, merely by adopting a very tolerant police attitude in practice. The same illustrated 'porno books' as have only just been permitted open display in Denmark have been on sale in Swedish newsagents for some years. In films, the pioneer demolisher of the censors must be Vilgot Sjöman, whose *491* was banned in 1964 for showing a wide range of sexual perversions and acts of violence, but was passed subject to slight cuts by the government on appeal. This film was the subject of an interesting experiment, in which it was seen by a number of young soldiers of a northern regiment. Half saw the censored and half the uncensored version; of these again half were told the film was censored, half that it was uncensored; finally, half in each of the resulting groups were given a positively oriented introductory talk, and half a negatively oriented talk. After the viewing, questionnaires were analysed, and it was found that those most emotionally involved were people who saw the cut version but thought it was uncut, while the least worried were those who saw the full version thinking it had been censored.

Since the ban on *491* was overruled, much of the heart has gone out of the Swedish film censorship, and this was confirmed when the government restored cuts which the board had made in *Dom Kallar Oss Mods* (shown at the 1968 London Film Festival as *They Call Us Misfits*). The film contained, in addition to a couple of passages of very frank four-letter dialogue, a sequence showing actual, unstimulated sexual intercourse, treated unsensationally but quite unequivocally (for what is believed to be the first time in a feature film), and it was that sequence which had been cut.

After this, it is hardly surprising that the Board passed *I Am Curious—Yellow* without attempting to cut the numerous sequences of frank but simulated sexual intercourse, in spite of protests voiced in the press and elsewhere and a complaint to the Ombudsman. The Board has not ceased all activity, however, and in the past three years such films as *Peeping Tom*, *The Born Losers* and *The Mercenaries* have all been totally banned and had the ban upheld by the government. *Wild Angels*

also was banned (as in Denmark) but was passed by the government for adults only.

The Danish and Swedish committees worked fairly closely together and took their time (over four years) in producing their reports. A great deal of research was undertaken, including a number of experiments under test conditions, and both committees took the view that censorship was only justifiable if it could be shown that viewing films produced harmful effects which a censorship could prevent. As might be expected, they both found that there was a complete lack of evidence that depiction of sexual relations or sexual frankness (even perverted) had any harmful effects. In particular, they denied, on the basis of research and other evidence, that sex films had any effect on delinquency.

The committees did, however, devote more attention to the problem of violence in films, and this is natural since the censor boards had been primarily concerned with that aspect when licensing films, the blanket ban on horror films being but one example. But even here, it was felt that exposure of the populace to violence from other sources—press, broadcasting, etc.—so reduced the specific impact of films that abolition of censorship would make only minimal difference to the total intake of violence. This was particularly relevant to the strongest argument in favour of censorship of violence: that a continuous diet would have a bad influence on attitude formation. The more specific direct effects of viewing violent films (e.g. stimulation to acts of aggression, triggering off criminal acts or causing mental disturbances) are infrequent, and depend more upon the individual viewer than upon the film. The conclusion was, then, that the noxious effect of violence in films was not sufficient to justify retaining a whole system of censorship to deal with it. Consequently, film censorship for adults should be abolished.

But since the risks, especially in the field of attitude formation and value judgments, were rather greater in the case of children, censorship should be retained for them. The definition of a child for this purpose did not, could not, be based on any strict scientific criteria, since individual capacities to cope with different types of film varied very greatly. In general, the use of two ages—puberty and mid-adolescence—was confirmed, and in fact the existing age limits were retained in each country (16 and 12 in Denmark, 15 and 11 in Sweden). But it would be important to revamp the existing censorship boards so that they would be properly qualified to classify films solely in the interests of children, and so should contain experts in child and social psychology, etc., almost exclusively.

The Danish law implementing the committee's recommendations was

passed in March 1969 and came into force in July. Discussion in parliament revealed very little objection to the principle of abolition, but centred on the privileged position as regards films shown to children on television, which were specifically excluded from the censorship law.

No Swedish bill has yet been presented; but it might be mentioned that the Swedish report (unlike the Danish, but rather like the British Theatres Act 1968 which abolished theatre censorship in Britain) devotes considerable space to the more general question of responsibility for a film's content. Briefly, it proposed that the rules of criminal and civil responsibility for films should be brought in line with the rules relating to the press and broadcasting. To facilitate this, and protect anonymity of authors and other collaborators on a film, each film should have a registered 'publisher' appointed by the producer or distributor who would in principle have sole responsibility, together with the exhibitor, for the film's content. This would prevent such occurrences as the actors in a film being prosecuted for obscenity, as has happened on occasion recently in Italy, including at least one case in which the film was even a foreign film. In order to provide certainty and security for the film industry, all prosecutions of films would need to be authorised by one person, the Chancellor of Justice (roughly equivalent to the Attorney General), thus ensuring a unified and reasonably logical prosecution policy.

It is difficult to forecast the influence which these two reports may have on other countries. The Danish experiment in the field of pornography is being widely used elsewhere as evidence, and it is unlikely that the censorship reports will be ignored in view of their thoroughness and clear conclusions. If the Dutch implement the recommendations of their committee, the Scandinavian approach will have received strong support, and it will become increasingly difficult for the British to hold out.

## A VIEW FROM NEW YORK

Andrew Sarris

WHEN NEW YORK POLICE seized Andy Warhol's *Blue Movie* back in August, it was announced that the initial complaint had been filed by a member of the Citizens for Decent Literature from Watertown, New York. According to *Variety*, 'the citizen in question apparently travelled the 400-odd miles (between Watertown and New York City) for the purpose of lodging said complaint.' Still, police action against even the most salacious movies has been more the exception than



the rule in New York City in recent years. Once the most repressed large city in America, New York has become one of the most liberated, and much of the credit (or blame) goes to Mayor John Lindsay's relaxed cosmopolitanism. Also, the Earl Warren Supreme Court passed many anti-censorship rulings, one of which obliterated the New York State Board of Regents as an organ of movie censorship.

Whereas in 1961 I went to Paris (and even London) for cinematic pleasures forbidden to New York, the pendulum has swung so far in the opposite direction that in 1969 New Yorkers saw more of the Lesbian seduction scene from *The Killing of Sister George* than did Londoners, and more of the simulated nudity and exposed genitalia (male and female) from *I Am Curious—Yellow* than were permitted to Parisians.

However, the Puritan tradition is still lurking in legislatures, court houses and police stations across the length and breadth of America. Even without judicial encouragement, theatre managers, projectionists, ticket takers and ushers are being arrested and harassed by law-enforcement officers



FORTIES STYLE: ELEANOR PARKER, RONALD REAGAN IN "VOICE OF THE TURTLE".

and vigilante groups. With President Nixon holding prayer meetings in the White House, liberals Earl Warren and Abe Fortas gone from the Supreme Court, and Mayor Lindsay very gravely threatened in this year's mayoralty election by two law-and-order candidates, no one knows how much longer the screen will remain relatively free to show the Truth about the Facts of Life. Hence, it would be premature to bemoan the New Frankness in cinema at a time when we may yet be cast back into the dark ages of the Hays Office when married couples had to sleep in twin beds and all sinners had to be punished.

Andy Warhol's *Blue Movie*, like most of his cultural enterprises, is a derisive mockery of the very genre he exploits, in this instance the quasi-pornographic movie of redeeming social value for the sake of its defence in court. Indeed, Paul Morrissey, Warhol's articulate producer, immediately challenged the authorities to show why *Blue Movie* was any more objectionable than *I Am Curious—Yellow*. But Warhol breaks the rules,



SIXTIES STYLE: SJÖMAN'S "491".

however hypocritical, by plunging right into his simulated pornography, after which his two participants (Viva and Louis Waldon) discourse on such social issues as Vietnam, Mayor Lindsay and the garbage strike. Vilgot Sjöman had the good grace to spend a whole hour in *I Am Curious—Yellow* punishing the audience with his social insights before satisfying its prurient curiosity. Apart from the rhetorical reflex of defending the artist against society on every possible occasion, it is difficult to become concerned, much less inspired, by the issues involved in *Blue Movie*, *I Am Curious—Yellow* and all the other cheerlessly carnal exercises in film-making.

Nowadays, more than ever, criticism is becoming as fragmented as creation. We are talking about different things at different times. That is to say that the sexual revolution is indeed interesting in itself. The evolution of the sexploitation movie in America deserves a separate chapter heading, though mainly sociological and only marginally aesthetic. Whereas once the film critic waited apprehensively for the novelistic adaptation to spring an embarrassingly sexless subterfuge, today's adaptors are as likely to embellish novels with additional vices and perversions. Hence the screen versions of Carson McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye* and Philip Roth's *Goodbye Columbus* are in some ways more clinically explicit than the originals. But what has this to do with Art or Truth or even Realism? Not very much thus far.

By any reasonably objective standard, the movie fare of 1939 is, in retrospect, more interesting and more exciting than that of 1969. This doesn't mean that we can or should go back to where we were. For one thing, we can see 1939 more clearly now than we could at the time, and what seemed decadent then seems classical now. Similarly, 1969 may emerge in retrospect, if not like 1939, perhaps like 1929, a year in awkward transition, not from silence to sound, but from the dramatic discretion of the public performance to the denuded documentation of the private experience. Already we have become familiar with body-dubbing as a sequel to voice-dubbing and stunt-doubling. We have been officially informed that Britt

Ekland's bared bosom in *The Night They Raided Minsky's* and Mia Farrow's in *Rosemary's Baby* and the rear view of Elizabeth Taylor on the staircase in *Reflections in a Golden Eye* were those of doubles.

Eventually, it seems, performers lacking ideal proportions may find stardom as difficult to attain or maintain as did the vocal defectives of the late Twenties. But more important, the sexual revolution and the attendant obsession with nudity may be making the screen more bourgeois than its erstwhile Marxist critics ever imagined. We were told for years in the serious historical texts on the cinema that censors and studios conspired to keep the truth from the masses, the implication being that once the censors and the studios were routed, a genuinely revolutionary cinema would come into existence. What has happened instead is that one set of fantasies has been replaced by another. And the change is less political than commercial.

On the positive side, the Negro is beginning only now to come into his own as a dignified and even heroic figure on the screen, but the relative stability of the ghetto market has had more to do with the rise of Sidney Poitier and Jim Brown than can be attributed to a more meaningful reduction in white racism. Similarly, the youth market has replaced the woman's market, so that movies have now switched from soap opera to dope opera, replacing one form of self-pitying sentimentality with another. As wives were always neglected, mistreated or misunderstood by their husbands, so now are young people neglected, mistreated or misunderstood by their elders. All young people seem to have exactly the same problems and the same values, despite differences in class, income, race, sect and even sex. Thus the pot-smoking hippies, like the adulterous victims of back streets and brief encounters before them, come predominantly from the ranks of the bored bourgeoisie.

In this context, the increasing frankness of the screen implies a social malaise it is under no obligation to explore. We are back again to Antonioni's commercially convenient diagnosis of eroticism as the disease of our age. Of course, we are all sick, and our society is sick, and our system is sick, and we can't wait to take off all our clothes, and cross-copulate and wife-swap and engage in polymorphously perverse diversions. But contrary to the expectations of optimistic liberals that the public would soon tire of libidinous licence, audiences continue to prefer Antonioni's explicit disease to his implicit cure. And it may be that even the resurgence of the Right in America will not be able to stem the hedonistic tide which seems to be the logical consequence of capitalism and materialistic individualism. The Puritans

*Continued on page 219*



Mel  
McKee

# 2001

## OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET

SEVERAL YEARS AGO C. S. Lewis wrote *The Ransom Trilogy*. This was Lewis' science fiction statement about God's relationship to man in all its contemporary aspects. Not only is man alienated from God but he is also in direct service to Satan. Such service broadens and deepens the chasm between God and man. Man is agitated by his constant frenzy, the constant contorted twistings of his busyness. Yet, according to Lewis' Christian-Freudian analysis, though not rationally aware of the broadening gap, he holds the horror, the torment of the separation, in his soul. Trying to avoid acknowledging the rupture, man struggles to throw himself off the Earth into space. This bridge of fiery force from planet to planet is an opiate of activity from the pain of greater separation. God will have none of it. Man is to stay on Earth—a point Lewis made explicitly clear not only in the dramatic context of the trilogy but also in the more direct exposition of an essay in the *Atlantic Monthly*. He is not to take his evil into

space where the powers of light still reign. They don't want him there on his terms. He is only to make contact with them when God calls one man out, purges him of the Earth, and makes him new flesh. Then, only then, may man through this one man be rid of his Satanic bonds, and purged, renewed, commute into space and there commune fully with God and be accepted with grace in His universe. Lewis told this story in three books, *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*. Recently, a major motion picture, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, contained some fascinatingly close parallels to the books.

The analogy of *The Ransom Trilogy* to the film carries two important considerations. First, there are the seeming parallels. But more important is interpretation. By understanding the parallels the motion picture viewer can perhaps better understand a major cinematic statement about man and his adventure into space. Kubrick and Clarke have not



fashioned a mere Cinerama gimmick. *2001* is not just Buck Rogers science fiction, with its sound stages cluttered with extraterrestrial toys carried to technical perfection. I have heard many of my friends credit it with only these juvenilia. But it is after all *A Space Odyssey* that is the important part of the title. For Kubrick and Clarke's *Odyssey* is like Nikos Kazantzakis' *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel*. These works are not just a journey of physical discovery and characterisation like Homer's but also are journeys of psychic and spiritual discoveries. In Kazantzakis' work man gets to God. In Kubrick and Clarke's work, with its analogies in Lewis' trilogy and the Christian myth, man can't get to God; God gets to man.

\* \* \*

The first important parallel is the broken silence. When the ape first swings the club, the monolith screams its warning. The killer ape has armed himself. It warns that the killing of kind, unlike the cat killing for food, is in the beast; he will destroy for the sake of striking the victim, for joy, for the grief he can take pleasure in. Such a beast is too fierce not to be noted. The universe must set guard against it and hold it within bounds. This warning is not given again until the second part of the picture. Then it is given voice during the initial contemporary conflict, Dr. Floyd's race to the Tycho Crater on the moon because of finding the monolith there. When the stone is unveiled and is touched by the sun, it sends out a shrill of warning into the universe. It indicates that man has invaded space and that the universe must act to contain his force and the killer nature which wields it. Before this the monolith's sensors have paid no attention to the spear, the bow and arrow, gunpowder, or the atomic bomb. These were mere weapon improvements. They did not constitute a new danger; they were only man making his initial swing of the club more effective. His victims were still the same: himself, and those within his reach. However, when man arrives on the moon, note has to be taken. The monolith screams. Man has not only his poisonous soul and his killer's club; now he also has delivery capacity.

Lewis' *Out of the Silent Planet* deals entirely with the breaking of silence between the Earth and the rest of the universe. Weston, the devil's surrogate, captures Ransom in a scuffle. He intends taking Ransom into space to Malacandra in order to exchange him for 'sun's blood', gold. He believes that the Oyarsa, the deity of Malacandra, wants a human being for sacrifice to either gluttony or curiosity. Weston, the scientist and technician, would trade Ransom, the philologist, for the ends of his science. However, the Oyarsa wants Ransom not for sacrifice nor as a specimen of Earth life; he wants him as the man who can be purified and sent back to Earth as its saviour. He will be the man who will ransom the world from its bondage of silence by ridding it of its 'bent' Oyarsa and bringing it back once again into the parliament of the worlds. The *eldila*, the guardian messengers of the Oyarsa, who made known to him the original transgression and then allowed it for the sake of the ultimate arrival of Ransom, allow Weston's ship into space for the second time. Before this time, they have driven the bent Oyarsa of the Earth out of the universe back into the limits of his own space. Their direct threat is that 'If he ventured to show himself outside the Moon's orbit, he'd be driven back again—by main force.' (*Perelandra*, p. 23).

In the film, Kubrick pictorially objectifies these *eldila*, or something like them, as monoliths. Ransom's being allowed into space through the permission of these spirits is parallel with the human race being permitted to set up Space Station V and the Clavius moon base and then, with Mission Commander Dave Bowman, Astronaut Frank Poole, Hal, the *Discovery's* outward journey to Jupiter. On Jupiter there is a spirit, a powerful intelligence, which manipulates the monoliths, in all likelihood messes up Hal, disrupts the communications aboard the *Discovery* and captures Dave. He wants Bowman for his purpose just as the Oyarsa wanted Ransom. Whether this purpose is benevolent or not the film does not make clear. But as we will see later, Bowman is also processed for the carrying out of an extraterrestrial intent.

The monoliths of *2001* can also be found in Lewis. As in *Out of the Silent Planet*, the monolith takes on a philosophical complexity in *2001*. Lewis describes Ransom as finding himself 'on the fringes of the grove and looking straight up the monolithic avenue.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 110). The stones are, unlike those in the film, sculptured. Yet the carvings on these stones are paralleled by Kubrick and Clarke, like the idea of the monoliths existing in pre-history. On Malacandra Ransom puzzled over the etchings on the stones; he noticed that 'The wings were perfectly recognisable, and this puzzled him very much. Could it be that the traditions of Malacandrian art went back to that earlier geological and biological era . . . when there was life . . . on the *harandra*? The answer of the stones seemed to be Yes.' One stone which particularly puzzled Ransom 'showed at the bottom a segment of a circle, behind and above which rose three-quarters of a disc divided into concentric rings. He thought it was a picture of the sun rising behind a hill. . . . He turned from it to examine the disc which rose behind it. It was not the sun. The sun was there, unmistakably, at the centre of the disc; round this the concentric rings revolved. . . . By this time he was quite sure that he was looking at a picture of the solar system.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 111). *2001* begins with this picture and then returns to it later. Like the novel, the film uses the scene of the sun, the planets, and the moon in concentric juxtaposition to emphasise something momentous.

In *Out of the Silent Planet* the impact of the carving is Ransom's realisation of the negative moral position of the Earth in the universe. He is staring at the depiction of the sun's relationships to the planets when natural curiosity drew 'his eyes on to the next ball which must represent the Earth. When he saw it, his whole mind stood still for a moment. The ball was there, but where the flame-like figure should have been, a deep depression of irregular shape had been cut as if to erase it.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 111). The Earth, long alien from the universe, has had the depiction of its Oyarsa defaced. It can show no goodness, but it is still there, filled with its capacity for wrath. In *2001* the sun is shown in juxtaposition, that is, in syzygy, with the Earth and the moon. This is almost a pictorial representation of the universe's negative notice of the Earth. When man first picks up his weapon and when he first begins to step outside his immediate space environment, the Earth is thrown into a shadow, out of the flame of the sun, and the monolith screams out its warning that man, the killer ape, is armed and on his way.

One of the scenes that the general audience, the critics, and the hippies, who delight to glut on psychedelic wonders anyhow, have noticed was the light scene. Dave Bowman zooms down a dividing sea of lights atwirl with cinematic passion. This scene the viewers have seen to mean—*something*. The general audience is agog with the popping flares; they are the casino fire display blasted against the night sky for a moment's brilliance. They are pop-corn entertainment at its height. To the technician the twisting of the luminosity is the kaleidoscope brought to the perfection of electronic elephantiasis. For the hippie the scene is strobe-lighted mind expansion. It is mysticism gone Hollywood and made cool with the *imprimatur* of a director whom they respect and with the aid of a first-run movie house. This fact that the picture allows the hippie propinquity to the establishment on puzzling grounds probably accounts for much of the popularity of *2001* with the hip set.

It provides them with the opportunity for a little esoteric smugness. Their interpretation—oneness with God's essence, oneness with all, whatever imagining—posed as an absolute, allows them to snatch the intellectual short hairs of the establishment. They can bleat *ex cathedra*, 'Man, if you don't know what it is, you'll never know and it's no use to tell you.' Most of the critics pass off the scene, along with some others, as being technically fine but philosophically abstruse. The critics are right. In the scene Kubrick is making more than a statement of technical expertise; he and Clarke are philosophising. Just what about is a question, but that they are acclaiming something hardly is. The scene has a hard parallel in Lewis.

Colours and lights blaze through the first two books of the



trilogy. *Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra* both give the general impression of a well-used palette. *Perelandra's* multitudinous scenes of light and colour especially strike the eye with the same psychedelic effect of the film's light scene. Only a few scenes are necessary to give this impression. On Malacandra Ransom tries to take in the new world with a glance, but he sees 'nothing but colours—colours that refused to form themselves into things. Moreover, he knew nothing yet well enough to see it; you cannot see things until you know roughly what they are. His first impression was of a bright, pale world—a water-colour world out of a child's paint-box; a moment later he recognised the flat belt of light blue as a sheet of water, or of something like water.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 42). When he looks about further, he notices that 'the pinkish-white vegetation went down to the very brink—there was a bubbling and sparkling which suggested effervescence.' He sees a mass of purple that looks like a heather-covered mountain. Beyond that he notices strange upright shapes of whitish-green. He spots further off a cloud-like mass that appears to be solid. Lewis describes it as looking 'like the top of a gigantic red cauliflower—or like a huge bowl of red soapsuds—and it was exquisitely beautiful in tint and shape.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 43).

Ransom also finds the new world infused with light that takes on the preternatural glow of the light in the last of 2001. He perceives that 'The lights, or suggestions of light, which yesterday had been scattered over the island, were now all congregated in this one spot, and were all stationary or very faintly moving. . . . As he looked up to see the first pale sunlight upon the monoliths, he became conscious that the air above him was full of a far greater complexity of light than the sunrise could explain, and light of a different kind, *eldil-light*.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 118).

\* \* \*

However, this general impression of the likeness of Lewis' colours and lights to the film's is not the strongest correspondence. 2001 appears to use light and colour in the same way as the two books. Ransom is aboard Weston's space ship on its way to Malacandra. Lewis describes his thoughts:

Now, with a certainty which never after deserted him, he saw the planets—the 'earths' he called them in his thought—as mere holes or gaps in the living heaven—excluded and rejected wastes of heavy matter and murky air, formed not by addition to, but by subtraction from, the surrounding brightness. And yet, he thought, beyond the solar system the brightness ends. Is that the real void, the real death? *Unless . . . he groped for the idea . . . unless visible light is also a hole or gap, a mere diminution of something else. Something that is to bright unchanging heaven as heaven is to the dark, heavy earths.*

Things do not always happen as a man would expect. The moment of his arrival in an unknown world found Ransom wholly absorbed in a philosophical speculation. (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 40.)

Later, back on Earth, Ransom discusses with friends the idea of the essence of life having visible substance:

. . . According to his own account he was not what we call conscious, and yet at the same time the experience was a very positive one with a quality of its own. On one occasion, someone had been talking about "seeing life" in the popular sense of knocking about the world and getting to know people, and B. who was present (and who is an Anthroposophist) said something I can't quite remember about "seeing life" in a very different sense. *I think he was referring to some system of meditation which claimed to make 'the form of Life itself' visible to the inner eye.* At any rate Ransom let himself in for a long cross-examination by failing to conceal the fact that he attached some very definite idea to this. *He even went so far—under extreme pressure—as to say that life appeared to him, in that condition, as a 'coloured shape'.* Asked 'what colour', he gave a curious look and could only say 'what colours! yes, what colours!' But then he spoiled it all by adding, 'of course, it wasn't colour at all really. I mean, not what we'd call colour. . . .' (*Perelandra*, p. 32) (*Italics mine*).

Ransom later sees lights and colours as Bowman and Kubrick's camera saw them. He sees them as a terrifying, flashing, vertical sleigh-ride:

His first impression was of nothing more definite than of something slanted—as though he were looking at a photograph which had been taken when the camera was not held level. And even this lasted only for an instant. The slant was replaced by a different slant; then two slants rushed together and made a peak, and the peak flattened suddenly into a horizontal line, and the horizontal line tilted and became the edge of a vast gleaming slope which rushed furiously towards him. At the same moment he felt that he was being lifted. (*Perelandra*, p. 34.)

In this scene Ransom's space ship, a celestial casket provided by the Oyarsa, has just dissolved around him; then he sees colours flash by him as he makes his journey to meet the Queen and Lady Mother of Perelandra. From her he learns the importance of making the choice between 'ascending to perfection or following an older world (the Earth) to corruption.' He too has to make this choice. Either he chooses to bring—with the aid of the Oyarsa—Thulcandra, the Earth, back into relationship with the universe or to let it be destroyed by complete corruption through the workings of the devil's agent, Dr. Weston.

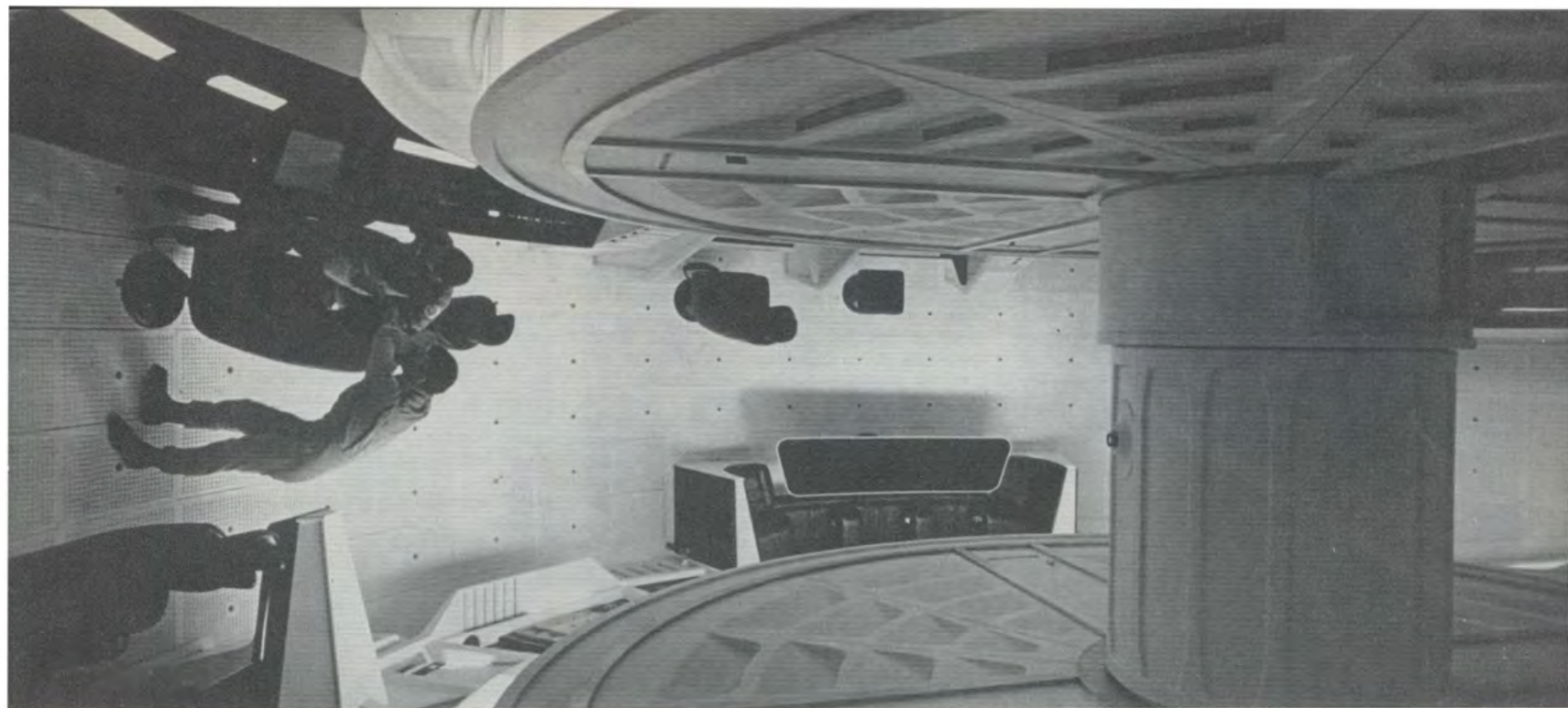
Dave Bowman has a similar experience to Ransom. He goes through visible light which is a hole, perhaps a time warp or a star gate as Clarke suggests, or perhaps an entrance into eternity or into a realm where deity dwells as Lewis suggests. It's doubtful that it is mere cloud cover as Kubrick has suggested. There is no reason to believe that the atmosphere on Jupiter is quite that spotty. Bowman does arrive in an unknown world, which the audience by that point in the picture cannot grasp as possible reality as they can see Space Station V to be an extension of what man is now capable of. Instead the audience sees the lights, the white house, and the foetus in the floating sac as a frustrating puzzle of unreality indicating nothing but fantasy or a philosophically significant state. It either merely wonders, or it is like Ransom in being absorbed in philosophical speculation upon arrival in the unknown world. At least, from some of the conversation I've heard, it tries to decipher the concept when the impact of the enigma strikes home. I have never heard in a discussion of this last part of the film anyone say, 'Where is he?' without climaxing the thought with 'What was it about? What did it mean?' Usually the questioner passes over the locale and gets right to the *topos* of his puzzlement. He wants, demands—as though Kubrick would take his anger as a clue to step out and explain—to know what it is all about. One can only say that it is about *something*. And that something is more a philosophical abstraction than a mere step forward in plot.

\* \* \*

The last important parallel that can be insisted on is the house of the *pfifltriggi* on Malacandra and the strange but Earth-like house in 2001. Ransom on Malacandra sees a 'quite recognisable object in the immediate foreground—a hut of unmistakably terrestrial pattern though built of strange materials.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 42). On the night of his arrival on Malacandra Ransom sleeps in this 'real house' that is 'strangely decorated.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 117). Later on Kanakaberaka, one of the *pfifltriggi*, the builders of the planet, tells Ransom that he can show him 'houses with a hundred pillars, one of sun's blood and the next of stars' milk, all the way . . . and all the world painted on the walls.' (*Out of the Silent Planet*, p. 115). The house that Ransom stays in is, like Bowman's in 2001, Earth-like but built of strange materials and richly decorated with white and gold. The house in the film too has a decor of white and gold and the materials are unusual, as the luminosity of the walls and floors indicates. In this house Dave Bowman undergoes his metamorphosis, just as on Malacandra and Perelandra Ransom underwent his more extensive one.

While he is in the house, Bowman is surrounded by light. Ransom too found himself a constant centre of light through the *eldila*, faint, almost invisible, light creatures and the guiding spirits of God which directed the earthling and began his change from Ransom, the philologist, the studier of words, to Ransom, the atoner, the *logos* bearer. Bowman's bright surroundings seem to purify him; they wither him into a wizened body. The living remains, lying in state on the bed,





"2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY": CENTRIFUGE ON THE DISCOVERY.

surrounded by whiteness, seem to have pressed out of them all earthly remnants of corruption.

With his purification achieved, epiphany comes to Bowman. The monolith appears and the great light blazing out from it springs upon Bowman's desiccated body and seemingly sucks him in. He is now to learn fully the heart of his mission. On Malacandra Ransom also somewhat learned his mission and, at the end of *Perelandra*, with his desert wandering completed, he sees the *eldila* barring his way. They want to end his sojourn in space. For he has undergone his preparation; now, he is to go back to fulfil his mission on Earth. Because of the brightness of the *eldila* when they all collect together, Ransom asks that his eyes be covered. The fierce *eldil*-light here and the blaze from the monolith in Bowman's room both seem to indicate a spiritual and intellectual transformation finally completed. Ransom is put into his space coffin, the lid put on, and his 'consciousness is engulfed.' (*Perelandra*, pp. 221–222). In this coffin, monolithic and without apparent propellant force, he is taken back to Earth.

Likewise Bowman's space vehicle is prepared, if not by deity, at least by the spirit of invisible mind. He too is sent back to Earth a new man, though in the more visibly ascertained concept of newness through the symbolic use of the foetus. Ransom then is prepared by God and His Christian powers to be a Christ. His purification is in a man's body and his purity is verbally described. By this method Lewis keeps the parallels between his work and the Christian myth tight. Kubrick and Clarke, however, have to show Bowman in the time limitations of the motion picture. He is shown as he is prepared for a new life and new powers and as he is given his mission. Being a cinematic character, Bowman has to be shown as a supra-human foetus—he is foetally made anew and his balefully glaring eyes bespeak a multiplied power.

\* \* \*

Thus, the broken silence, the restriction against space travel, the monoliths, the use of solar relationships, the colours, the lights, the hole into the unknown, the unknown planet—not by name, but definitely by fact—the strange but Earth-like house, and the metamorphoses are closely related in the novel and in the film story. These concrete parallels are tremendously close. The ideas of the works also indicate analogies. During this essay, I've tried to indicate these interpretations as I've presented my premises for the conclusion that, because of the correspondences, one could almost argue that *2001* is *The Ransom Trilogy* visualised. The ideas are much like what Lewis indicated and explicitly said. But a masterpiece like *2001: A Space Odyssey* neither has to be

interpreted just by Christian ideas nor by any other one set of concepts.

Recently I have noticed statements that would determine the interpretation of the picture by what Kubrick says. However, what Kubrick says may be of interest for interpretation, but it is not necessarily important. The intent of the author cannot be accepted as *the* valid criterion of judgment. After all, criticism has a history filled with authors' misreadings of their own works, or of their reading their intent in lieu of what they actually created. In criticism the object is the text. So, one can read articles in *Esquire* and *Playboy*, but mainly as human interest stories about what a fine director thought about his picture and the ideas in his subject matter.

One may also read Clarke's works as an attempt to determine the meaning of *2001* more clearly. Lewis saw man as perfectible under the divine manipulations of God. Clarke, however, is more from the Renaissance than from the Bible. He sees men as having capacities for perfection and the capabilities to attain a perfect state; yet he sees man's attainment of a quicker perfection through outside, superior forces to be better than by his own slow efforts. In fact, when man is aided by superior forces, he usually betters them in the end. Man on his own doesn't reach such an exalted position as Clarke shows in *The City and the Stars*. For the most fertile and rewarding growth man needs the guidance of a superior race. Clarke's *Childhood's End* states this idea. So, in the light of it and the book written from *2001*, the monoliths can be seen as computers, gigantic cosmic teaching machines, set up by a superior race to help man learn how to kill for food and manipulate his environment and to teach him to kill man and thus bring about the workings of the survival of the fittest. In this manner, Dave Bowman in the foetal state can be seen easily enough as man's intellect magnified instead of his soul purified.

Whatever the interpretation may be, it is the insistence of this essay that an interpretation should be. *2001: A Space Odyssey* is not just supreme cinematic technology; it is also a symbolic system. It has a relationship to the mythic of Lewis' imagination and his philosophy; it needs both to be seen and to be interpreted. And then after all Lewis and Clarke were friends. The American pair once took a wilderness journey; they experienced together there the new wild nature and the spiritual impact of it. The English pair have taken a fictional journey into space and into the possibilities for hope and despair that man's space adventure has waiting for him.

(The edition of *THE RANSOM TRILOGY* used in this essay is the Macmillan Paperbacks Edition, 1968.)



# FILM REVIEWS

## THE WILD BUNCH

**P**USHING THE AUTEUR theory into realms of fantasy, it is tempting to take the image of the scorpion in a nest of killer ants which appears like inverted commas round the fantastic opening holocaust of *The Wild Bunch* (Warner-Pathé) as Sam Peckinpah's personal visiting card, left on Hollywood's doorstep. Perhaps more than any other contemporary director, he has suffered the stings of the Hollywood machine, and even *The Wild Bunch* reveals the hand of the butcher in several minor cuts and in the speeding-up by a queasy censor of some slow-motion violence. Not, happily, that it is particularly damaging this time, since the film drives to its foregone conclusion with the sureness of an arrow.

Violence has not hitherto been one of Peckinpah's particular distinguishing marks, but it is in a way the logical outcome of the preoccupations of his earlier films with the passing of the old West, and the strain put on old loyalties by new moralities. In *The Wild Bunch* the year is 1914. Civilisation has made an anachronism of the outlaw, and he is being driven ever southwards in search of new pastures by ruthless, scavenging bounty-hunters, paid by the railroad and banking interests to do their dirty work for them. A whole way of life is being relentlessly stamped out, and to describe it, Peckinpah has equally relentlessly cleared the decks.

Gone are the proud, romantic images of horsemen sweeping across the horizon in the manner of John Ford, or the gentler, wearier ones of ageing gunmen pausing by the trailside to bathe their aching feet. Gone, too, the taste for the bizarre which only survives, muted and undemonstrative, in the temperance procession which marches, like Tennyson's six hundred, right into the valley of death, or the moment of strangely disquieting cataclysm when the wild bunch and their horses founder in a sand dune and their leader seems shorn like Samson of his strength. Instead the film is built up step by step with an almost clinical control to illustrate the process of rigor mortis. For Pike Bishop (William Holden), like the gunman hero of Melville's *Le Samourai* who arranges the ceremonial of his own death, is a dead man

from the outset; and the film details the way he is pushed into facing this inescapable fact.

At the beginning, Bishop and his men ride into a small Texan town to rob a bank. A posse lies in wait on the rooftops overlooking the main street, fingers itching on the trigger. The temperance procession of stately matrons, tambourines and mocking children has just reached the bank when spontaneous combustion occurs and incredible carnage begins. For perhaps five minutes bullets explode like star-shells through flimsy shirts, blood spurts, bodies topple from the rooftops or are slammed across the street, horses rear and writhe, superbly controlled snatches of slow motion seize and prolong, yet somehow pity, the agony of death and mutilation, and time is suspended for a moment as Bishop turns to stare down the barrel of a rifle aimed but not fired by a former colleague, Deke Thornton (Robert Ryan). As the surviving members of the gang make their escape, the dust settles on a scene worthy of Goya's 'Disasters' as the bounty-hunters move in, squabbling and looting.

Thornton is sickened by the massacre of the townsfolk and by the indifference of his railroad employers. Bishop, exulting in a job cunningly pulled out of the fire, never even thinks about it. Not that there is any marked difference in moral sensibility between the two men; it is simply that a changing world has placed them on tangential rather than parallel lines. In the old days, the job well done, the unquestioned loyalties, the simple law of the gun, were everything: "When you side with a man you stay with him, and if you can't do that you're like some animal." The code was harsh, unsentimental, and yet in its own way as innocent as the children who gather round laughing while the ants and scorpions blindly destroy each other. As the wild bunch move ever southwards in retreat from the tide which threatens to engulf them, the edges begin to fray, they snarl and quarrel and settle their disputes at gunpoint. Only in the heat of action do they recover the harmony which enables them to function together like a well-oiled machine.

The paradox—or if you like, the tragedy—of the film is that Bishop and Thornton, ranged by circumstances on opposite sides, each begins to move too late towards the other. Bishop, discovering that he has been tricked into stealing metal washers instead of gold because the bank was way ahead of him in planning, realises what Thornton realised some time previously, "We got to start thinkin' beyond our guns. Those days are closin' fast." He also realises (the flashback to Thornton's arrest) that it was his failure to think which caused Thornton to secede from the gang. Nevertheless, he again decides to rob a bank, knowing that 'they' will be waiting for him; and his dry comment, "I wouldn't have it any other way," acknowledges that this is the end of the line.

All the conventional signs and symbols of sentiment are ruthlessly beheaded in the film. After the massacre, among the first signs of life in the streets are the children, happily playing cops-and-robbers among the corpses; when one of his men is too seriously wounded to ride on, Bishop simply shoots him; a Mexican girl singing in heroic posture on a troop train with bandolier slung across her shoulders turns out to be not a revolutionary but an oppressor; and of course the wild bunch, arriving in Mexico just as Pancho Villa is taking up arms against oppression, throw in their lot with government gold rather than revolutionary right. So when Thornton edges away from his position on the side of the law, following Bishop as closely as an angel of death but refusing to pull the trigger, it is not simply because he is disgusted by the squalor, cupidity and inefficiency of the men who are now his comrades, but because he has lost something more precious than moral rightness.

What the film is all about is contained, essentially, in two brief scenes. At the fiesta in the Mexican village, home of one of the gang, the world is forgotten in the joy of celebration, and even the wild, irreconcilable Gorch brothers are seen happily playing cat's cradle with their girls or courting under the trees with the gauche courtesy of schoolboys. "We all dream of being a child again," murmurs the village

"THE WILD BUNCH".





ancient, "even the worst of us... perhaps the worst most of all." It isn't possible, of course, and all one can do is draw a line, as Dutch (Ernest Borgnine) does when told that Mapache, the cold, callous bandit general they are doing business with, is, like them, a thief: "We ain't nothing like him. We don't hang nobody."

It is this fine distinction which provokes the second, equally terrifying, holocaust of the end. When the Mexican member of the gang is seized by Mapache for personal reasons, the rest accept it as one of the rules of the game; but when they see him being tortured, humiliated, dragged through the mud, and finally having his throat cut to satisfy a whim, everything comes to a point. Trapped between the scavengers and the degenerates, they stage—for the last time and for their own benefit—a clean death to herald the end of an era. When the smoke clears, the bounty-hunters move in, the refugees move out, and a new age begins as the last survivor of the wild bunch appears at the head of a group of peasant revolutionaries to ask Thornton to join them: "It ain't like it used to be, but it'll do." And both laugh, not with the hollow mockery of the end of *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, but with the pleasure of innocence regained.

TOM MILNE

## LA FEMME INFIDELE

NEARLY A YEAR AGO, just after he had finished *La Femme Infidèle* (Gala), Claude Chabrol said in a television interview that he always made films about the bourgeoisie because that was the class he knew best. And the reason for that was simple: "I am one of them," he went on, "I am one myself—but I don't like them."

He's talking about a class of Frenchmen we should judge as somewhere between comfortably-off and rich. He's fascinated by their high degree of social organisation. It might be supposed that the organisation was designed to protect their position, as a defence of power, or status, or to ensure various kinds of immunity. But on the whole Chabrol seems inclined to view it as a defence against the unexpected, against indignity, and against passion. In this aspect, *La Femme Infidèle*, set as it is in a mansion in Versailles, inescapably presents a picture of an *ancien régime*. It is as though Chabrol had decided that the barriers that crashed in 1789 were the most superficial ones: economic, political, social. Beneath them the emotional rites which sustained the *haute bourgeoisie*—refined or calcified according to your taste—clicked on unperturbed, even in the arriviste. *La Femme Infidèle* is about the irruption into this ritual not so much of passion itself, as of the evidence of passion, the awareness of passion, above all the threatening acknowledgment of passion.

At first sight it looks as if the film is about modern marriage. There is a husband, 40-year-old Charles Desvallées, a genial insurance broker, putting on a little weight. There is a wife, Hélène, younger, beautiful, very much a successful man's possession. There is a bright 10-year-old son without whom they apparently could not live, though it is not simply that he is holding them together. They appear to love one another. At the same time there is an unspecified sexual trouble which drives her into a satisfying affair with a handsome



"LA FEMME INFIDELE": MICHEL BOUQUET.

divorced writer of her own age (Pegala). Desvallées finds out and kills Pegala without telling her. Discovering his crime with something like pride, Hélène will say nothing either to him or to the investigating police. Their mutual love is strengthened.

The marks of ritual are beautifully recorded. The long, slow left-to-right pans bringing the car to the side of the house and Desvallées across its frontage, the patient and smooth attention of the camera as Desvallées and his wife take tea on the lawn, look at snapshots, enjoy the sunshine. The perfect familiarity of the almost silent evening meal, built up in close-shots until a wider angle establishes the symmetry of husband, child and wife. Hélène preceding Desvallées into the sitting-room for coffee with a proprietorial backward glance which tacitly establishes her expectation that he will be following. These and a thousand similar details are exact and telling.

What's even more impressive is the manner in which Chabrol controls the pace. A great deal of the film passes in watching movement, not always purposeless, but often inconsequential. The interest lies in the degree of haste, the familiarity of the movement, its utility or pointlessness. Desvallées is steady-paced, his small purposes served by careful, economic movement, the camera following him with unemotional, unironic attention as he proceeds from telephone to cigarette packet to car-parking disc to record player. Hélène is more languid, more mysterious, her secret purposes hinted at by long slow tracks-in which close her off from her surroundings, isolating her narcissism, her passion or her grief. With Pegala gone, she shuts herself in her bedroom and, standing at the foot of the bed, lowers herself backwards on to it, her limbs dead, the only sound a wordless gasp of hurt which the camera has to lean over her to hear.

Pegala is brisker, uneasy, his movements unresolved. On the bed with Hélène he drops the lid of the teapot. In his embarrassing (and fatal) meeting with Desvallées his hands and eyes are everywhere, protesting,

assuaging, confessing, ingratiating. It is clear that glamorous, independent Pegala is not of the stuff to survive. When Desvallées kills him we are at first as astonished as the murderer is by the revelation of that secret strength, not merely physical. But we recognise that the core of subterranean violence is not only held in check, but husbanded, by a skin of civilisation which perhaps generations of Desvallées had worked hard to preserve. The excuse Hélène gives for driving into Paris to see her lover is that she wants to have her skin cleaned. She can do little about what's underneath it. Desvallées' violence is suddenly shocking because it is in contrast to his habitual economy of effort, and the power of the sequence in which he disposes of the body is proportionate to that economy. For here he turns himself with great efficiency into a work-machine and, mopping blood, wrapping, dragging, heaving, driving the body of Pegala, he is sustained as always by the rituals of habit and the pull towards normality which govern his life.

The most stunning images in the film are here and at the end. The first is of Desvallées' face against a blank sky, taut with effort and concentration, lifted out of time and place, bearing the burden of his dead enemy to be swallowed up in a featureless, primeval swamp. The police are persistent but their purposes now seem trivial. At the end, with symmetry re-established, the final shot unites a physically separated family. Desvallées, about to be taken off for further questioning, looks back up the drive at his wife and son, posed together like a snapshot under the trees. The camera begins to track slowly from left to right, the movement associated with him, and in the same moment, for her, closes in towards Hélène through the leaves, this time not to isolate, but to preserve.

What has Chabrol demonstrated? That despite appearances—everything in Chabrol is despite those—the heights and depths of emotion can be visited and returned from safely?—or encompassed and assimilated?—or encountered and avoided?—para-



doxically by cleaving to just these restrictive forms of life? Chabrol doesn't like the bourgeoisie, but we doubt whether he is more fascinated or repelled by this artificial skin of behaviour. Are the heights scaled, as it were, or skirted, after all? Doesn't he admire, despite himself, the sophistication of this fighting unit, and their ability to survive? When Desvallées confesses to Hélène, 'Je t'aime comme un fou,' is he preserving an invaluable relationship or (the bourgeois sin) a priceless possession? At any rate this sure-footed, finely acted and spellbinding film is not ruffled, but deepened, by that ambivalence.

GAVIN MILLAR

## LE GAI SAVOIR

AFTER HE GOT BACK from that trip to Damascus, old Saul-called-Paul must have been something of a drag to his old drinking companions. 'What's gotten into him?' one can hear them say, just like most of Godard's admirers who have been bitterly complaining about *Le Gai Savoir* (which although begun in December 1967, was only completed after the apocalyptic Month of May, 1968). And a possible reaction to this film—indeed, it was mine the first time I saw it—was one of nearly total rejection: it just wasn't like the others; one felt almost cheated. Here we had a young couple sitting in a TV studio for an hour and a half: talking, just talking. To be sure, there was the occasional shot of a street, but by and large the film could be seen as a masochistic exercise in which Godard systematically—almost religiously—stripped himself of all his aesthetic trump cards, all his aces. The screen actually goes black for minutes at a time, which is about as self-effacing as you can get.

Of course, another reaction was possible: to try to find in this film those elements which are like the earlier work. To examine it as an aesthetic object, picking out the good bits. And there are quite a few. The

first image, for example, of the orange-ribbed transparent umbrella, is as beautiful as anything he has ever done. The photography of Jean-Pierre Léaud and Juliette Berto is good enough for a shampoo commercial, so lustrously does it render their hair, shining with mysterious highlights. The Cuban revolutionary hymn with which he ends most of the episodes; the piano sonata which turns up as punctuation; the extraordinary mask effects, now with Léaud's face hidden behind Mlle. Berto's, now the opposite, and, most effectively, with her lips synching his words spoken behind her; the remarkable camera movements going from left to right to pick up Léaud, then Mlle. Berto, and in the same shot, Léaud again. The list is, if not inexhaustible, then at least long: her yellow gown with its purple peignoir, seen against the figures of Batman and two other comic strip heroes; the nearly invisible construction of what looks to be a formless film.

But such an appreciation would run totally counter to Godard's intentions. He did not want to make an 'aesthetic object'; the 'work of art' is all too easily assimilated by the very society it is attacking. The work of art can be isolated, defused, reabsorbed by society. He has not totally avoided this danger, but from the disastrous reactions at Berlin, at least, he came pretty close.

The most intelligent way of approaching the film would seem to be to take it *sui generis*: given Godard's career, and assuming he has not completely cracked up, what did he think he was up to?

Godard always was a critic as well as a film-maker, so one should be neither surprised nor upset if *Le Gai Savoir* (Kestrel) is something of an essay; a pamphlet, even. One could say that he should in fact have written a pamphlet. But this would be fatally to misunderstand his new position. Film must be made for that enormous portion of the globe (60%, some say) that is illiterate. He is too clear-headed to think that *this* film is for the Cambodian coolie or the Peruvian peon; and his final dis-

claimer is neither false modesty nor masochistic self-beratement. When he says, 'This film didn't want, couldn't want, to try to explain the cinema, nor even constitute its object. More modestly it tries to give several effective means of so doing. This is not the film that should be made, but rather it shows that, if one has a film to make, one would necessarily pass by some of the paths trodden here.'

But film is valuable not only for illiterates: it can show what is being hidden. It is both practical and theoretical. It's more fun, says Godard, than an equation or a blackboard demonstration. Accepting this, we must now examine what this blackboard demonstration is about, what this equation stands for. Originally the commission from the French television network was for a film about education, and *Le Gai Savoir* was announced as being a modern version of Rousseau's *Emile*. But it turned out otherwise: the film is really about language.

The recently rediscovered writings of the German critic Walter Benjamin shed much light on Godard's development, not as a film-maker, but as a critic who uses film instead of paper. Benjamin's great unfinished work (*Paris, Capital of the 19th Century*) was to have been a study of the complex links between economic evolution and cultural facts. Benjamin, before his untimely death in 1940, began to feel certain that this was in fact the essential task of the critic. Like Godard, he was prey to more and more frequent psychological depressions, and this, combined with the growing Fascist threat, brought Benjamin's work to an ever more exacerbated state. Like the flame between two carbon arcs, he was stretched, almost to breaking point, between Marxist politics and the metaphysics of language. 'The most worn-out Communist platitude,' he wrote, 'means more than the most profound bourgeois thought, because the latter has only one true sense, that of apology.'

Godard has always been as sensitive to cultural climates as the most intellectual barometer, so I doubt whether the comparison with Benjamin is fortuitous; equally important is the whole recent French interest in linguistics, and, most recently, in the American writer Noam Chomsky, whom Godard actually cites in *Le Gai Savoir*.

This does not mean that Godard has pored over the works of Benjamin or Chomsky; he doesn't have to. He is like the bookstore employee he talks about in *Le Gai Savoir*, who over the years had had just two or three seconds between the time he took the books from the customer and the time he wrapped them up to glance at their contents: over the past thirty years he has educated himself, beginning with the alphabet and the multiplication tables. Now, says Godard, he is launching into Faulkner and Chomsky. It would appear that Godard has a magpie talent for picking up a book, mechanically leafing through it, and maddeningly coming up each time with its essence.

From his leafings through Chomsky and the other linguistic philosophers, he has reached the conclusion that language is the key to our problems; it is the enemy. As Juliette Berto says at the beginning of *Le Gai Savoir*: 'I want to learn, to teach myself, everyone, to turn back against the enemy that weapon with which it attacks us: language.'

'Yes,' replies Léaud, 'we have to start again from zero.' 'No,' she answers, 'before starting again, we have to go back to zero.'

"EASY RIDER": DENNIS HOPPER, PETER FONDA.





and going back means disintegrating man and his language. Thus also Chomsky: The renewal of the study of language should lead to a liberation from all our behavioristic conditioning, and should ultimately lead to a political criticism of our alienation. All thought has been consciously or unconsciously bound up with the conditioning of bourgeois society of the past hundreds of years; it takes a great effort to look at everything afresh, questioningly, and *Le Gai Savoir* is an attempt at this most arduous of intellectual exercises.

However, it has to be admitted that often the effort proves too great, and Godard spills over the edge of common sense into intellectual dishonesty. To the unsympathetic, much of the dialogue will sound like naive gibberish; on the other hand, it is not easy to divest oneself of the preconceived ideas of a lifetime; and Godard must be allowed something for having made the effort.

He has, in a sense, left the film unfinished. The sequence of Juliette Berto's song he assigns to Bertolucci to do; the analysis of an 'honourable family' is willed to Straub, etc. Although Godard might not like it (he isn't too partial to Bach) one might usefully compare *Le Gai Savoir* to *The Art of Fugue*. Both are didactic, methodical; both unfinished; both have little overt emotional subject matter; both are grandiosely simple in means; finally, both have their boring moments. If this is to be the cinema of the future, God help us. And yet, it seems to me certain to exercise a profound influence on younger film-makers. Just as Bach's audience dwindled to nothing in the early 19th century (*The Art of Fugue* was actually given its first performance only in the 1920s), but continued to have a great influence on the composers of the period, so *Le Gai Savoir* will never be a popular film, but it might well turn out to be an extremely important one.

RICHARD ROUD

## EASY RIDER

IT WAS, I THINK, in *Wagonmaster* that a weary band of Mormon settlers finally came to a hilltop, and paused wondering at the virgin lands of Utah while their elders gave thanks to God for this vision of their promised land. Oddly enough, it is this archetypal image of pioneering days that comes persistently to mind as one watches the two hippy motor-cyclists of *Easy Rider* (Columbia) pursue their odyssey for the 1960s: from Los Angeles, after a profitable drug deal, to New Orleans and a dream of Mardi Gras, freak-out, and the finest whorehouse in the U.S.A.

For, unlike almost any other film one can think of for years back, *Easy Rider* does not see America as a selection of picturesque fragments—the autumnal woods of Vermont, the awesome canyons of Colorado, the dusty plains of Texas—but as a vast, mysterious continent, forgotten and ignored by its tribes of city-dwellers. Speeding along the highways on their glittering, gracefully arching machines, delightfully discovering the pleasures of rolling hills, grazing sheep and sunsets, they gradually begin to see America, naked and unashamed, as Columbus might have seen it. Not for nothing does Captain America (Peter Fonda) fly the Stars and Stripes from his petrol-tank and crash



"MIDNIGHT COWBOY": DUSTIN HOFFMAN, JON VOIGHT.

helmet, or his friend Billy (Dennis Hopper) wear buckskins and Buffalo Bill hat. America past and present, one might say, in search of America lost.

Their tragedy is two-fold. The further they travel from base in hippy-civilised Los Angeles, the deeper they plunge into Injun territory. Turned away from a motel as undesirables, arrested for tagging happily on to the end of a drum-major parade ('Bunch of weirdo hillbillies,' mutters Billy furiously of the Southern deputies, unconsciously stealing their line), driven out of a café by hostile natives, they finally fall victim to ignorance and intolerance. And the last image of the film is as desolate as the series of funeral pyres which dot the roadside in Godard's *Weekend*: two towering, evanescent sheets of flame where drunken farmers have shot one motorcyclist off the road just for the fun of scaring hell out a long-hair, and the other to prevent him causing any trouble.

The other side of the tragic coin is perhaps even more tragic. En route for their dream of bliss in New Orleans, trailing a blaze of liberty which brings them envious glances and a disciple—the small-town lawyer who casts all caution to the winds, digs out his old football helmet, and joins them on the road—Captain America gradually begins to realise that there may perhaps be another kind of freedom. 'You sure got a nice spread here,' he wistfully tells a small-time farmer obviously saddled with hard work and a horde of children, 'it's not every man that can live off the land... do your own thing in your own time.' Essentially passive, the note of yearning in his voice is cruelly pinned down and dissected in the strange, touching sequence where they encounter a community of flower-children trying to scrape a living off the land. But the land is barren, they have no idea how to work it, they are virtually starving; and as they begin their rite of prayer for the sowing of the new crop ('Thank you for our place to make a stand...'), the camera pans in a slow 360°

circle round the patient, Christ-like faces, recording the pathetic, hopeless optimism of a marijuana dream. 'We blew it,' Captain America says sadly as he and Billy leave New Orleans, vaguely aware that their dream somehow did not live up to reality, but with no idea at all what anybody might do about it.

A first film, directed by Dennis Hopper and produced by Peter Fonda (who appeared together in Corman's *The Trip*), *Easy Rider* has its faults in the uneven acting styles, where Jack Nicholson's brilliantly witty performance as the voluble lawyer stands out like a sore thumb against the background of naturalistic mumbling, and in the crude psychedelia of the New Orleans sequence (ill-matched on 16 mm., to boot). But it succeeds where it matters most, in communicating a yearning vision of a different way of life, in an America seen as a vast, unexplored repository of beauty, optimism and adventure.

TOM MILNE

## MIDNIGHT COWBOY

UNLIKE JOHN BOORMAN's *Point Blank* and Peter Yates' *Bullitt*, both of which managed to uncover some cinematically virgin aspect of America's urban landscape and to flesh out their criticisms of the society they found there with an obvious pioneer enthusiasm and delight in discovering the reality that lies just beyond the cliché, British director John Schlesinger's first American feature confines itself to the now familiar terrain of the American Dream turned nightmare: a society so obsessed with material prosperity that its citizens—equating sex, love and money—add themselves to the unending stream of desirable consumer goods and suffer from the concomitant problems of advertising, fashionable packaging and rapid obsolescence.

The sequence over which the credit titles



appear establishes the theme: the heroic romance of mythical America and the actual debasement of that myth, the confusion between reality and cheap illusion. The empty, elongated screen of a drive-in movie mars the otherwise uninterrupted panorama of a Texas prairie (whose breadth and isolation it was doubtless intended to reflect in lifelike, widescreen proportions), and while real horses graze in unconcerned tranquillity behind the screen, in front of it a lone child sways frenetically to and fro on a plastic rocking horse, an apt if obviously contrived symbol for the hero.

For from this desolate landscape, dressed in a cowboy outfit already incongruous in Texas but specially purchased for the romantic identity he believes it will confer on him, swaggering Joe Buck (Jon Voight) will ride the Greyhound bus to New York to seek his fortune as a professional stud, his trigger finger permanently fidgeting on the dial of a transistor radio that blares out messages of appalling social significance. Joe barely has time to tack his poster of Paul Newman's hustler to the wall of his seedy hotel room before he begins to discover the hard way that everyone in New York is hustling too. The first lady to accept his professional services turns out to be a middle-aged chippie who takes him for \$20; the smooth-talking Bronx boy Ratso Rizzo who offers for an advance fee to act as his manager turns out to be a con-man little more successful than himself; the pimply youth whom he reluctantly permits to perform fellatio on him in a Times Square cinema reveals afterwards that he has no money. The only thing the city will buy from Joe is the blood which, ironically, he must sell to the blood bank in order to stay alive.

Eventually Joe suspiciously accepts Ratso's invitation to join him in the icy room of the condemned house where he lives, and their uneasy friendship develops slowly into a feeling of mutual concern; and while Ratso progressively deflates Joe's dream of playing John Wayne in the big city, Joe slowly comes to believe in the tubercular Ratso's dream of a healthy new life in Florida. Just as Joe collects his first \$20 from a bemused but sexually demanding socialite he has met at a party, Ratso collapses. Desperate to save his friend, Joe picks up a middle-aged queer and beats him up (possibly murdering him) to steal the money to take Ratso to Florida. But as their bus crosses into the Sunshine State, Ratso coughs his last cough.

With such an essentially melodramatic ending (not after all so far a cry from *Camille*), one would have expected a director anxious to establish the pathetic beauty of a platonic love affair between two drifters in New York's neon wasteland to attempt a certain delicacy of touch. Yet in *Midnight Cowboy* (United Artists) Schlesinger has opted for a method that does everything possible to assimilate his central characters to the ugly environment which—if we are to take the symbolism of the ending seriously—they are struggling to transcend, a method which consistently minimises the distinction between what the characters see and what they supposedly feel.

After a promising nod at the Texan landscape, where (another symbol for the hero?) a derelict roadside shack boasts the world's longest hot-dogs, Joe's journey to New York is largely taken up with his confused memory or fantasy of making love to a local girl called Crazy Anne, and



"THE TEN THOUSAND SUNS"

with various patchwork recollections of early mornings spent in his grandmother's bed. In his first bout of urban love-making, shots of his bare and vigorously bouncing buttocks alternate with flashes of TV programmes (the couple are of course copulating on top of a remote control channel changer), and the orgasmic moment is registered by a shot of coins spurring from the mouth of a fruit machine.

A television programme about cosmetics for poodles captures Joe's attention until the pay-TV in his hotel room runs out, and much of his early time in New York is spent in psychedelic nightmare fantasies of chasing Ratso through the subway. His first night in Ratso's room involves another fragmented dream of his participation in a gang bang on Crazy Anne, while Ratso has glossy-ad dreams of life as a Florida millionaire; and the party to which they both go is held by some underground film-makers who not only provide a light show but also such strong marijuana that it takes but two puffs of a cigarette to set the cowboy hero hallucinating.

Presumably Schlesinger wanted to use vulgarity as a comment on vulgarity, to demonstrate that 'you are what you eat' and that his heroes' pathetic dreams are the product of the media that constantly bombard them. Well and good in theory, but with the vulgarity so generalised one is left wondering whether—for all the New York locations—it was really worth leaving Carnaby Street.

Yet though Schlesinger's method constantly undermines the individuality of his displaced heroes, it is a reflection on the superb and largely unsentimental performances of both Jon Voight and Dustin Hoffman that one cares almost too much about them (enough to want to stop the film and find out more). The pair spill over the tidy symmetry of the roles assigned them by the plot (an updated version, really, of the fable about the town mouse and the country mouse) to establish a common humanity in their transparent bravado and growing concern for one another's welfare. After the neutral passivity of his performance in *The Graduate*, Hoffman establishes himself as a fine character actor, limping along, gesticulating nervously and emitting a fast-flowing stream of invective in a Bronx drawl that

turns so easily into a snivelling whine, while Jon Voight—flexing his muscles, flashing his empty, gum-chewing smile and taking thirty seconds longer than anyone else in New York to react to any situation or observation—more than fulfils the promise of his debut in *Out of It*.

Their performances combine with Waldo Salt's exceptionally witty script (adapted from James Leo Herlihy's novel) to ensure that the film is always entertaining. But it also aspires to a level of moral seriousness, and on this level it not only fails to answer some of the questions it poses but even occasionally to acknowledge that it has posed them. Joe may forget about the telephone he has rammed into the mouth of the badly bleeding queer, but surely we are not expected to forget as well. Despite Ratso's death, the ending, with Joe abandoning his cowboy clothes and planning to find a steady job, has a strangely optimistic flavour. And it is never quite clear whether Schlesinger is suggesting that it is society alone which is responsible for Joe's crime, whether he views it as a brutality necessary to re-establish the purity of the American Dream, or whether—in the interests of an approximately happy ending—he has merely forgotten all about it.

JAN DAWSON

## MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

IT SEEMS AS improbable that Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment* (Contemporary) should have been approved for export by the Cuban authorities as that Buñuel should have made *Viridiana* under Franco's nose. Both films in their different ways undermine, or significantly question, the cultural values of the country which sanctioned them.

A man, Sergio, and his country, Cuba, are at crisis-point. The search for new values, the re-orientation and positive reconstruction of Cuban society in 1962, have repercussions on the metaphysical quest of the individual. He cannot operate indefinitely in his apolitical vacuum yet he



cannot embrace the naïve, simplistic fervour of the Revolution. By a historical accident he is a peripheral adjunct of the great Communist society: he has rejected his bourgeois formation yet his lucidity, scepticism and quirky humour lead him to reject also the over-facile, ready-made alternative—unquestioning acceptance of the Castro Revolution. Neither of these stereotypes provides him with an adequate solution.

According to Edmundo Desnoes, on whose book the film is based and who collaborated with Alea on the script, Sergio's 'irony, his intelligence, are a defensive mechanism which prevents him from being involved in reality. . . . He does not assume his historical involvement,' i.e. in the creation of the post-revolutionary society. Yet Alea's direction evokes sympathy not condemnation for Sergio's plight—superficial but miraculously not annihilated by the new order. (He even expects to continue living on his rents for a further dozen years or so.) Alea's implied criticism is presumably also directed against the new society, which with its inflexibility and failure to assimilate the deviant thinker is certainly no panacea for the intellectual and his existential problems.

When Sergio bids an unemotional farewell to his wife and friends at Havana airport in 1961, his feeling of relief in the face of this exodus of 'decadent, bourgeois imperialists' matches the mood of the nation. But this resemblance is only superficial. Sergio's motives are revealed immediately afterwards back in his apartment. As the camera pans round the room his voice on the soundtrack tells us that for years he has wanted to write a diary. His inner silence and solitude as he drinks his coffee and butters his bread in the kitchen are moments charged with incipient awareness of the isolation of his condition, breaking in upon him almost with the force of a rebirth. He muses ironically about change: both himself and Havana seem the same; it is not yet the millenium. The 'Cuba libre e independiente' statue down by the harbour no longer has the imperial eagle but 'where is the dove that Picasso was going to send?' He plays a tape of a conversation with his wife, Laura. She finds him disgusting so he sneeringly remarks that it is because he has run out of Yardley's hair cream and Colgate toothpaste. Touches of voyeurism and fetishism are revealed plus a capacity for self-mockery, whimsy and sensuality. The opening section is completed by a series of close-ups of sad faces (joyless, post-revolutionary Cuba!) and then a freezing shot of Sergio which emphasises his isolation, poised Jason-like between the old and the new culture, accepting neither and wondering: 'What is the meaning of life for them and me—but I am not like them.'

By way of brilliant contrast the next section reveals that neither is he like Pablo, who epitomises the right-wing standpoint and whose dismissal of the new Cuba as inefficient seems vindicated when the garage mechanic, who has been asked to check the oil, says they haven't got any but he can always check it anyway. In the presence of Pablo guilt flits uneasily across Sergio's mind, like a series of Oxfam poster images, as he recalls that four children die of malnutrition every minute in Latin America.

A brief episode with Noemi, the girl who does Sergio's cleaning, enables him to indulge in erotic fantasies. Elena, the next girl he picks up and then tires of, can be seen as a microcosm of the new Cuba. Her

ambition to be an actress is mocked, and actors are compared to scratched records as with superb comic verve short film clips are repeated in rapidly alternating forward and reverse motion. Sergio's contention that people always need someone to think for them is given point by a close-up of a poster of Castro and the Playa Girón. A shot of Pablo at the airport on crutches and behind glass emphasises Sergio's isolation and also reinforces his desire for lucidity—'a disagreeable emptiness'.

Sergio is as alienated by Hemingway's escapism as by the writers' conference on 'Literature and Underdevelopment'. His memories come between him and action in the present. Tangled tree-roots, successive dissolves and slow pans of trees and foliage illustrate his half-remembered, peaceful idyll with Hanna, his first love, and the complex motivation whereby he let her go. Ominous hints of encroaching bureaucracy as his property is ponderously checked are followed in rapid succession by Sergio's despairing reflection—'My life is like a sterile ornamental plant.' Then the farcical court case, in which Sergio's victory is marred by his world-weary comment that he is too educated to be innocent and his accusers are too ignorant to be guilty. With the missile crisis of October 1962, external, political pressures finally impinge on Sergio's situation; tanks and armed convoys urgently threaten his non-alignment and reveal the impossibility of the individual solution in a Communist society.

DON ALLEN

## THE TEN THOUSAND SUNS

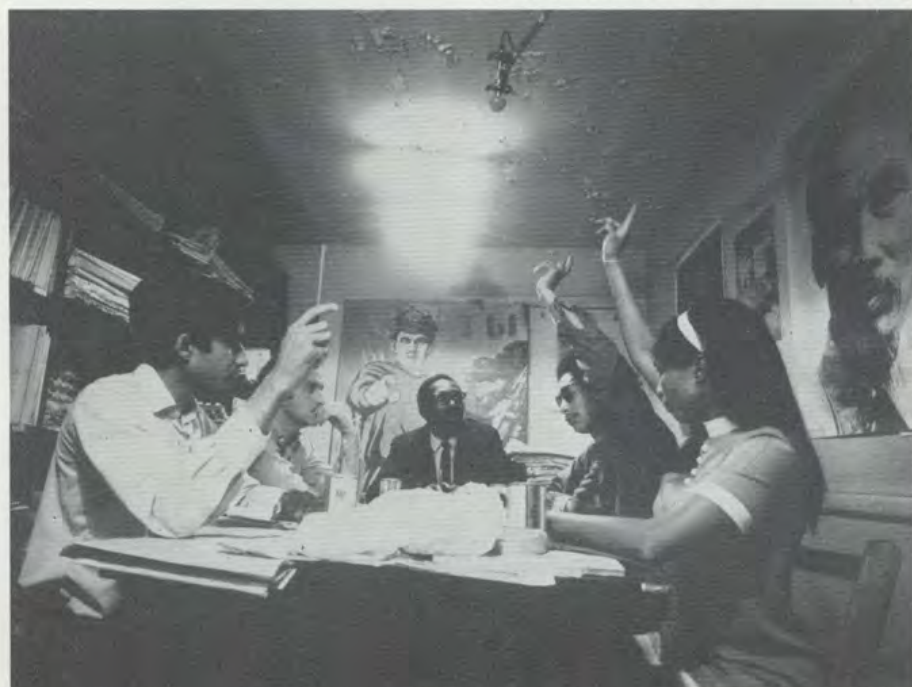
IN THE FAR DISTANCE we see a line of horses, manes ruffled by the wind, cantering across an iron bridge. A striking image of freedom, until moments later a train rumbles across the plain and we realise that the horses are being requisitioned for the war. It's a Jancsó tactic, and this is Jancsó territory: the familiar horizontal line, people manipulated like pawns in a chess game played by

unseen giants, the sense of a world paradoxically sealed off within the endless expanse of the great Hungarian plain. Ferenc Kósa's *The Ten Thousand Suns* (Contemporary) has the same kind of dispassionate, totally objective detachment. Historical events (and the thirty years of the film's compass include 1939, 1945 and 1956) are conveyed obliquely; there is no comment or evaluation simply because there is no need for any. Content dictates form, the images speak for themselves. A single shot of peasants herded together like cattle as they wait to sell their employment to wealthy landlords tells us all we need to know about the feudal conditions of pre-war Hungary, when two thousand Hungarians owned one-half of the arable land and Hungary—we need to remind ourselves—was a signatory to the Anti-Comintern Pact.

This is the point of departure for Kósa's film, which follows the fortunes of one peasant, István (Tibor Molnár), and his family and friends through the next thirty years, the ten thousand suns of the title. Unlike his friend Bánó, István is a man with no political commitment. History reacts on him—the requisitioned horses include his only possession, and later he spends several years of forced labour in a stone quarry for alleged complicity in the murder of a local official—but his only reaction to the turmoil of these years is to go on living until he achieves his ambition to be master of his own piece of land.

The land, and the landscape, is the film's continual focus. An old woman stands up at a meeting to tell the story of a king called Lear, who died because he gave up his land; and the horizontal line is constantly broken by groups of people and objects—sometimes immobile, as though rooted on the plain like ageless trees, sometimes breaking into sweeping arcs of movement, vertical lines snaking across the landscape, as when the peasants scramble to take possession of the smallholdings allotted to them in the post-war distribution of land. Here the camera swoops along with the peasants, pausing momentarily to take in one of the dispossessed landlords

"PRAISE MARX AND PASS THE AMMUNITION".





explaining that he is not angry with his former serfs because he too is now only a category.

The film is built up of brief, elliptical scenes like this, the total reversal of historical circumstances suggested in a single image. István moves in and out of the frame, picked out as just one more worker in a stunning aerial shot of the prisoners in the quarry, or later suddenly and unwillingly implicated in the events of 1956 when a student thrusts a gun into his hands and he finds himself levelling it at Bánó and his friends as they stand waist-deep in water. He refuses to shoot, but his one positive political act is as meaningless as all Bánó's arguments: Kósa immediately cuts away to reveal three of the accused (accused of what we are never told) casually liquidated in a church. 'Strangers never come to this village to hoe, only to tell us what to do.'

This oblique method, the recurring alternation of movement and stillness, the formal geometry of space, time and people, is no mere stylistic indulgence. As with Jancsó, the image does not simply suggest the symbol, it *is* the symbol. 'Paper is patient,' someone says, 'so communism was described beautifully.' But Kósa's film is not, of course, a critique of communism. It is rather a detached analysis of the growing pains, the mistakes that were made, the effect on the peasants themselves of the historical necessity of collectivisation and its aftermath. The peasants, Kósa suggests, did not act, they were acted upon. But there is no point in apportioning blame. To István's son all this is history, and with luck the next ten thousand suns may be different.

DAVID WILSON

## PRaise MARX and PASS THE AMMUNITION

MADE IN COLOUR on a budget of £25,000, Maurice Hatton's first feature film puts the case for radical social change in Britain today. At the same time, and with deliberate irony, *Praise Marx* (New Cinema Club) demonstrates the arrogant futility of most revolutionary activity in the context of a far-Left that pursues its dream of international solidarity by engaging in a continuous process of quarrelsome sectarian purges.

Like Godard in *La Chinoise*—but with rather more disenchantment and an unmistakably British austerity—Hatton confines his attention to a small and exclusive cell, the Revolutionary Party of the Third World, comprising five active members and a rank and file fast rising to 25. Debates on protocol and the proper interpretation of Lenin are the principal form that their mission of preparing society for socialism takes, while the hero Dom—expelled from the Communist Party at the age of 15 and swiftly hauled before a tribunal of his present comrades on charges of dangerous individualism—supplements these activities by patiently seducing a succession of attractive bourgeois girls in the hope of contaminating them with his revolutionary fervour. 'The sexual front of the class war, as Trotsky said, is not to be underestimated.'

Dom is currently preparing an updated version of Engels' *Conditions of the Working Class in England*. And Hatton inserts documentary footage of hazardous working conditions and slum housing to illustrate

both the contemporary relevance of Engels' observations and the honourability of the cause Dom serves. Similarly, a montage of advertisements for consumer goods demonstrates the proposition that it is a bourgeois minority which dictates the tastes and standards of the working masses. Dom himself, with his Carnaby style clothes and Casa Pupo rugs, unconsciously lends weight to this proposition.

Dom's theory is impeccable; and quotations from the sacred texts provide him with a substitute for conversation and also with an answer for everything (LUCY: 'Do you really think there has to be a Revolution in England?' DOM: 'Bookshelf. Fourth book, second row'). But this theory derives essentially from texts descriptive of the Industrial Revolution ('What a time that was! Garibaldi was in Rome and Marx was in the British Museum!'), and proves little help today. The injury with which Dom returns from the Paris barricades results not from heroic participation but from him getting his hand caught in a door at the Sorbonne. And when the Party imperiously orders him to drug and torture an informer they have found in their midst, the abstractions of the mentors are of little assistance, and it is to Harrods that he must turn for help, in the form of an electric cattle-prodder. Though in France and Czechoslovakia the revolutionary path may appear a straight one, on the home front it is still a question of selecting the slogan for the latest poster and agitating on the margins of minor industrial disputes.

Inevitably Hatton does not always manage to maintain his hero on the precariously thin line between bad faith and dedicated sincerity, and from time to time the varying levels of his irony make the revolutionary end seem as ludicrous as the means. Nor, with the exception of John Thaw as the intellectual hero clinging tenaciously to his proletarian origins, do his actors always rise to the level of his barbed original script. But in the face of very real technical difficulties he has succeeded in capturing the full, self-absorbed, conspiratorial flavour of radical politics among the Suez generation, already declining into early middle-age and combining dedicated intellectual activity with tortuous apologies for their own kind of gracious living. And this in itself is no small achievement.

JAN DAWSON

## KES

IT WAS FORMERLY said that the English and Americans had everything in common except language, and sometimes one feels much the same of film and television. Ken Loach's first feature *Poor Cow* was dismissed by at least one critic as an unhappy mixture of television and Godard, and accused of sentimentality and inappropriate lyricism. A hostile critic might perhaps similarly describe *Kes* (United Artists), an account of the changes effected in the life of a budding delinquent by his discovery and training of a young kestrel hawk, as television and Truffaut. But though probably invited by the determined publicising of the director as part of 'the British New Wave', this would be unfair. And certainly, though we are again treated to a conventional telly-type coverage of the British working-class taking its pleasures beerily, and to moments

of what one can only call telly-vérité, Ken Loach can hardly be accused this time of a predilection for the picturesque. On the contrary, he captures admirably the gritty quality of Northern life, and that mixture of the rural and industrial which persists despite all the new housing estates, modernised schools, working-men's clubs, the telly and the pit-head baths.

This is hardly surprising, for not only was the novel which *Kes* (generally) closely follows set wholly in author Barry Hines' native Barnsley, but Ken Loach made his film entirely on location in the streets, homes, clubs, betting-shops and markets of the town. Much of it is set in the school attended, either as pupils or teachers, by a number of its players. Loach has chosen his cast carefully, mainly from former TV associates with Northern backgrounds or performers from the Northern Club circuit, with a number of townspeople often playing themselves, like Zoe Sunderland as the assistant at the public library where Billy's efforts to borrow books on falconry are frustrated, or Martin Harley as the young messenger unjustly caned when he joins Billy and other petty offenders in the queue outside the Headmaster's study. Above all he has been well served by peaky-featured 15-year-old David Bradley as Billy Casper.

All the scenes to which Billy is central are admirable, whether depicting his home life with his good-timing Mum and elder brother, his paper round and petty pilfering and closing wasted weeks of a schooling which he realises all too well is leading inevitably to some dreary dead-end job; or the brief vision of another kind of life which Billy glimpses while training his hawk, or haltingly endeavouring to convey the fascination involved to his class or to the one master who shows any understanding.

Loach is perhaps less fortunate with scenes involving some of the adults. The tormenting of Billy by the hearty sports master, and the scenes with Colin Welland (who played in several Loach-directed episodes in *Z-Cars*) as the sympathetic Mr. Farthing, succeed. But some of those involving Jud at work or the boys' mother out on the spree seem clumsy and irrelevant, and the discovery of the bird's disappearance, killed by an angry Jud when Billy fails to put on his winning bets, lacks impact. As a result the film's ending, with Billy burying the body in the fields and returning home defeated and disconsolate, lacks the intensity of, for instance, the final scenes in *Les Quatre Cents Coups*. Perhaps the weaknesses here stem from the lack of that autobiographical element which so strongly marked Truffaut's film. Nevertheless *Kes*, admirably photographed by Chris Menges (who was camera operator on *Poor Cow*) is not to be lightly dismissed; and Loach's success with young players especially makes one eager to see his forthcoming film for the Save the Children Fund.

JACK IBBERTSON

## CINDERELLA—ITALIAN STYLE

JUDGING BY THE critical reception afforded Francesco Rosi's *Cinderella—Italian Style* (M-G-M), one would think that the famed director of *Salvatore Giuliano* and *The Moment of Truth* had somehow let the side down by making a 'mere fairy-tale'.



Stuff and nonsense, of course. Rosi's story of the obstreperous prince who likes horses more than women (initially, at least) and the peasant girl who conquers him, is certainly lightweight material, but he uses the narrative merely as a peg to hang a delicious visual *divertissement*. Fantasy of this order (taking in echoes of Andersen and the Brothers Grimm) is a notoriously difficult element to control; but Rosi has found precisely the right way, and proceeds to shoot the whole thing, as one would have expected, with a great documentary eye.

The Prince (Omar Sharif) charges through the countryside on his white horse, and after meeting Isabella (Sophia Loren) pottering about the turnip fields persuades her to cook him the seven dumplings which should help him to choose a bride. A suitable beginning for any fairy-story, with its bantering humour and handsome hero and heroine. What is entirely real is the setting, held in beautiful long shots, with a particularly tetchy lot of grimy peasants lurking in the background. From then on, the film moves from one set-piece to another, taking in a stunningly shot tournament, all swirling tracking shots, a magical wood complete with cackling witches, and a ridiculously funny transformation scene when thousands of chicks spill out from their shells and clutter the palace grounds.

All the way through, one senses a feeling of enjoyment, even of relaxation; what possibly started as a commercial chore has become a labour of love. The location shooting, with its sense of space and light is splendid enough, but the later stage in the castle, when Isabella participates in a dishwashing contest to decide the Prince's bride, has a visual styling surpassed only by Visconti. The jealous claque of magnificently garbed princesses passes along marble corridors; jewels flash and tempers flare as they begin their task. Amidst all this finely controlled elegance, Rosi's quirky humour keeps seeping through, as when one of the princesses faints quietly away when confronted with her pile of dirty dishes. Having been granted such a visual feast, it seems grudging to complain about the awkward dubbing. Loren speaks her own lines and, in any case, Rosi is mainly concerned with using her as a marvellous physical presence, flaunting about her farmhouse in rags in the early stages and then, in her newly acquired regal robes, advancing on the camera like a splendid tiger. Her eyes alone can light up the 'Scope screen, and Rosi knows how to fit them into his pattern.

One or two awkward moments of slapstick intrude, but this is a real film by a real talent and intended, surprisingly enough in these days, to be enjoyed. So why not do just that?

JOHN GILLET

## JUSTINE

ONLY THE CITY is real,' says the note at the beginning of the *Alexandria Quartet*, and through the piecemeal reminiscences of Durrell's four interlocking novels, as with the poems of Cavafy to which they constantly refer, emerges an impassioned portrait of a teeming multilingual community, part-mysterious, part-seductive, and part-hostile. *Justine*, of course, is seen by Durrell as the city's personification—an



"CINDERELLA—ITALIAN STYLE"

innocently rational child-woman whose ways are neither to be challenged nor halted, but merely adored. Appropriately enough, although as something of a shock to her menfolk, she eventually retires to a Palestine *kibbutz* for complete subservience to the community's interests, while her lower-class parallel, Melissa, the city's other face, proves by contrast fatally ill-equipped to cope with the cauterisation of love affairs. That Justine and her immense circle of acquaintances should find themselves on film sooner or later was only to be expected. So too, perhaps inevitably, was that the one screenplay (by Lawrence Marcus) to survive among the many planned and projected should serve as a reminder that to reduce Durrell's quartet to one unit is like attempting to capture Alexandria in a single snapshot.

The film started out as somebody else's, and rumour still credits some of the location shots elsewhere—although there are few enough of these, and fewer still that look as if they could only have been shot in Egypt. George Cukor is scarcely to be blamed if his salvage work on *Justine* (Fox) seems a labour of expertise rather than of love, but there is scant comfort for Durrell, for whom passion is vital, in the crisply cerebral result. Cavafy's territory has vanished with barely an echo beyond some passing lip-service and a bazaar or two, and with it has been eradicated the aphrodisiac atmosphere that pervaded Durrell's purpose. In its place is a Hollywood hybrid, a curious compendium of distortions veering from the inexplicable to the banal, yet underlaid, in the manner of a medieval painting obscured by later frescoes, with a distantly coherent vision all its own.

Setting aside for a moment that Michael York appears as the sort of gauche adolescent for whom the leading lady would hardly have blinked an eyelash, his stuffy contributions to the soundtrack in the form of commentary nevertheless define the tensions of *Justine* as consistently those

of lost causes. From the dying old man clutching his beloved's scent-bottle to the hotblooded young nationalist shot down amid sunflowers, from the lugubrious French diplomat to the minor British consular official, from the ambassador to the night-club dancer, all the characters in the film lose, in a silent misery, what they care most about. The merry-go-round of obsessions has changed from Durrell's colours to Cukor's, but it remains an overt communion of anguish which, in theory at least, should adequately enough have held the whole piece together.

The canvas, however, was too large, and Durrell's images, welcome or not, have an intrusive persistence: one looks in vain for the duck-shoot death of Capodistria, the very existence of Clea, or the surely integral fate of Melissa. The speeding surface of *Justine*, scudding reassuringly over enormous holes in the narrative, makes for an impressive demonstration of what can be accomplished by sheer professionalism, but there are too many sequences when despite the Impressionist paintings on Cukor's sets the backgrounds absorb the characters in front of them into a uniform implausibility. The miscasting of Michael York as Darley is a crucial flaw, at best thinly papered over by well-nigh perfect performances from Anouk Aimée, Anna Karina, and Dirk Bogarde in one of his going-to-seed roles. But the dissatisfaction goes further—to the insufferable horseplay between Philippe Noiret and Marcel Dalio, to the elaborate masked ball and the accidental killing which together drag the film off at a tangent from which it only shakily returns, and to the brutally stark contrasts in colour and lighting from one scene to another (and all too often from one shot to another), caused as much by haste as by the lack of appropriate scenery. It is a sorry irony that from writings so concerned with actuality should emerge so many lifeless fragments.

PHILIP STRICK



# BOOK REVIEWS

**THE MOVIES, MR. GRIFFITH AND ME, by Lillian Gish and Ann Pinchot. Illustrated. (W. H. Allen, 50s.)**

ANYONE WHO ASPIRES to the stage or films should read this book. It wouldn't hurt anybody to read this book. It is not only a document of the making of early films written by the one most qualified to report it. It is also a present-day journal of a very busy workman. No nostalgia—oh, a few things were better then, it appears (*everybody* worked harder). This is only stated as a fact. No tears.

It shows many angles of film-making past and near-past by one of the most dedicated actresses ever born. Probably the most. Partly because of the nature of her jobs, challenged in more varying ways, called on to do more, sacrifice more and challenged more often than most people. And enough to scare the pants off most business men.

Miss Gish is generous enough to include all the Motion Picture profession of those early—really early—days in their devotion to their jobs. You will think that no human being alive except perhaps a lion-tamer has had such singleness of purpose (and he isn't very smart if he hasn't). In the far-off underpaid days, even that low salary allowed for high living compared to theatre salary spread over the year. Especially when you were often stranded in the Middle West 1,200 miles from where you had, somehow, to get to before you could even look for another job. (Stranded means that the manager has taken what money there was and gone. Kaput.)

Then remember that this young actress was a child of five. By ten, a seasoned troupier knowing that any food obtained would have to last perhaps for days until the actress in charge of her and playing her mother could manage to scrape up enough to get at least the usual two bowls of porridge for dinner. If our lady had been as her sister Dorothy is quoted as saying, 'without a nerve in her body', you might feel she was able to cope easily. As a young teenager, journeying alone to see their father who was dying in an asylum, arriving at the station in the middle of the night, no one meeting her, she was terrified like any other young teenager would have been.

There is no bitterness. Miss Gish expresses gratitude for the rough school which taught her courage, self-reliance, independence. Many stalwart stockbrokers jumped out of the window rather than face financial disaster. What disaster there was, our friend took it in her stride. And may her star ever shine bright for the courage to bring a blackmailer to court.

Touching gratitude and devotion to D. W. Griffith is richly told. What a fortunate thing this book is written. No one else had such an insight into his character. And again sharing the credit for devotion with all the company, who would work regardless of whether there would be a salary at the end of that week or six or seven weeks later. Eventually 'Miss Lillian' as Mr. Griffith called her (he came from the South) and the great man were working as one, and he was able to leave a production suddenly without warning and let her take over. At the same time the studio was under construction. With everything going wrong as it can do, yet to have the whole thing jell to his taste and turned in on time, this was a fantastic accomplishment.

Her tender relationship with her mother and endearing remembrance of her sister Dorothy is delightful and gay. And the early association with the Pickford family when they were still Smiths is great fun. All the young ones—Mary, Lottie, Jack, Lillian and Dorothy—seasoned troupers from the road, presenting their cards with the names of their respective shows from last season and requesting complimentary seats at a box-office will delight all actors. Well, it makes sense—they understood 'it was a very fine play with good actors' and perhaps they would learn something from them. (Jack must have been in nappies!)

Miss Gish has so graciously moved with the times in returning

to the stage or wherever it was—or will be—interesting to her, writing, producing, directing, researching costumes and customs—there just is no end to it!

It would be nice to hear that some 'stars' throwing their tiny weight about were put in their places and told to get on with their job, which is acting, and allow the producer to get on with his—lighting the thing. But for Lillian Gish to be told this seems impertinent. About her work there is nothing she doesn't know. And she's been working at it for a long time. Obviously from the book this is not a pose to impress somebody. The lady really does know her okra.

This charmer has set an example for any workman alive. The next time anyone asks you if it is true that Talkies ruined the careers of silent film stars please quote the career of Lillian Gish. You couldn't make her redundant if you tried. She's way ahead of you, already polishing up on what she knows about something else.

A great deal can be said about the self-effacing style of Miss Pinchot's writing. She doesn't fling about big words to prove Miss Gish an intellectual. The whole thing has a feeling of sincerity. Constantly I saw only Lillian telling me all the facts in the book, herself experiencing the fears, horrors, terrors, joys and happinesses.

What I want to see now is for La Gish to make a small, low-budget, experimental film, which means that she would be able to make it just the way she thought it ought to be made. A film she mentions 'of affirmation' that D. W. Griffith wanted to make about the American Negro. On page 163 she says, "Shortly before his death we talked of doing such a film. . . . The white man had taken centuries to attain the intellectual and spiritual powers that many Negro citizens had achieved in a few decades. . . . No other race in the history of mankind had advanced so far so quickly."

BESSIE LOVE

**THE MOVIE MOGULS, by Philip French. Illustrated. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 42s.)**

"DON'T GIVE THE IMPRESSION that these are bad people," Scott Fitzgerald reminded himself in a working note for *The Last Tycoon*. Well, he should know. Philip French's fair, short survey puts both sides of the case for the moguls. Joseph Mankiewicz—not really a mogul—was the one to whom Scott Fitzgerald cried, "I'm a good writer, Joe, honest," and it's easy to think of Hollywood simply as the Artist up against It. Though the moguls meddled, they produced good pictures, sometimes by the seat of their pants. When Harry Cohn of Columbia boasted of judging a Lang film nineteen minutes overlength from the moment when 'his ass started to itch', Lang agreed with him. As French says, we can hardly accuse them of crass and philistine autocracy and then deny them any credit for the countless fine pictures which we think of as Hollywood at its best. Their real function was not as businessmen—many of them were grotesquely extravagant—but as showmen with mass tastes and a flair for spotting star talent.

But not bad people? Cohn had a joke electric chair in the executive dining room that guests were made to try. It worked. When reason failed to persuade, Louis B. Mayer's final argument was to fling his interlocutor to the office carpet and attempt to beat sense into him. Dore Schary, his second in command, often left the office to vomit after seeing Mayer humiliate a subordinate. And for all their blab about democracy through the years, when the chips were down self-interest overcame political principles. They were out-and-out monopolists, keeping foreign films off the screen, block-booking movies, exploiting contract performers, freezing them out when they were finished, blocking union stirrings amongst their employees.

The roll-call is resonant, but depressing. Cohn, DeMille, Mayer, Schenck, Fox, Goldwyn, Laemmle, Lasky, Loew, Selznick, Skouras, Thalberg, Wanger, Zanuck, Zukor, the Warner Brothers. What other trade, art, profession, industry, could so list its leaders and stir so few pulses? Not generals, not prime ministers even, could leave the heartstrings so untugged and the head so unadmiring. Almost alone Thalberg comes out of it well, and even his legend is tarnished by the outrageous, but typical, Sinclair/Merriam affair.

In 1934 Upton Sinclair stood as Democratic candidate for the Governorship of California on an 'End Poverty in California' ticket. His funds were to come from the undertaxed rich and especially from booming Hollywood. This was too much like socialism for the industry and the studio heads, under Thalberg, threw Hollywood behind a Republican nonentity called Frank Merriam. The smear campaign which followed was outstandingly vulgar, cruel, and contemptuous, amongst other things, of public gullibility. Sinclair was sunk, and the moguls had struck a typical blow for their concept of democracy.

Was there anything to be said for them? They had had a lot to put up with. Many were victims of foreign oppression (they were



almost all Jews) and some suffered discrimination all their lives. The Warner brothers were unable to join or indeed to enter the country club right across the road from their studios and had to send messengers when they wanted to fetch an employee who was a member. The lobby of the International Reform Bureau voted in 1920 to rescue the motion pictures 'from the hands of the Devil and 500 un-Christian Jews'. The threat of xenophobia and an air of unrespectability lingered about the film business throughout those years. The moguls were anxious to make money, but they were desperate to achieve respectability and to be accepted. One of the most revealing quotes in the book is Adolph Zukor's at the opening of his Paramount Cinema in New York in 1926. "... to think that a country could give a chance to a boy like me to be connected with an institution like this."

The chances, it seems, were more taken than given, with a combination of ruthlessness and cheek that is almost, but not quite, endearing. But then any temptation to feel real sympathy or admiration for the moguls is stifled by a glance at the Waldorf Declaration which all studio heads signed in 1947, thus blacklisting the Ten. Unlike Scott Fitzgerald, Philip French is rightly not worried about giving the impression that these are bad people, or at least people acting badly. "Breath-taking in its constant contradictions, shocking in its cravenness, yielding far more to the industry's opponents than they had ever dared to ask, the Waldorf Declaration was the pathetic product of insecure, worried and self-evidently unprincipled men."

This is a nice book: well-written, witty, acute, fascinating and horrifying. But it's much too short, and at greater length Mr. French could have filled in not less, as he threatened once to do, according to the introduction, but more detail about plain, old-fashioned mogulling. As it is he runs the risk of leaving us the impression that, with a full programme of beating-up, throwing-down, smearing and electrocuting his fellow-workers in the seventh art, the average mogul just didn't have time to be bothered with the movies.

GAVIN MILLAR

---

**THE CELLULOID MUSE: Hollywood Directors Speak, by Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg. Illustrated. (Angus and Robertson, 50s.)**

---

OH YES, I SEE: interviews with Hollywood directors. Quick flick through the table of contents. Hitchcock, Lang, Cukor, Minnelli, Bernhardt... Bernhardt? *Curtis Bernhardt*? The very same. Not to mention Jean Negulesco, Irving Rapper, Mark Robson and sundry others who never get a look-in in this sort of book, or get interviewed in the right sort of magazines, or indeed as far as I know get interviewed at all. It makes a nice change. Not, necessarily, that they are being shaped up for a big revival of reputation: one would find it difficult to imagine any of them decorating the pantheon of some new generation of *auteur*-hunters. But there are other people in the film world besides the small handful of fashionable *auteurs*, and there is no reason at all why they should not have fascinating things to say, while there are accepted *auteurs* who seem to have very little to say to eager enquirers about what they want to do on screen and how they set about doing it: of those included in this book Minnelli is a notorious example. So one would rather see a Minnelli film any day, but one may just find that Mark Robson is more interesting to talk to.

And so in fact it proves. Robson can tell us about the beginnings of Welles' career, and about working with Val Lewton in the Forties. Irving Rapper is good on Bette Davis. Jacques Tourneur (more approved, but seldom talked to) adds further insights on Lewton. Several of the directors interviewed have worked with the unstoppable Jerry Wald in their time, and all of them seem rather to have enjoyed the experience. And all sorts of ragbag bits of information crop up, not perhaps suggesting any very deep new truths about film art, or anything like that: but all the same, it is strangely intriguing to hear how Paul Henreid was made to look like a cellist in *Deception*, by having his hands tied behind his back while a real cellist's arms enfolded him in a passionate embrace and played for him. It is a little sad to see King Vidor explaining about *Beyond the Forest* that 'it's become famous through being referred to in the opening scene of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*'—which for any self-respecting film fan is really putting the cart before the horse, since surely the main memorable thing about *Virginia Woolf* is that it's the play in which the heroine keeps trying to remember the title of *Beyond the Forest* all through the first scene?

Apart from what the directors say—which is given in a briskly edited form without interruptions from the interviewers—*The Celluloid Muse* has an additional charm in that the authors' introductions to each conversation place the subjects so neatly in their context. Most of them are interviewed in their homes, and the

---

## THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

*offers for hire*

**Preview Theatre**

*and*

**Rostrum Room**

*at*

**Royalty House, 72 Dean Street, London W1**

The well appointed **Viewing Theatre** has comfortable seating for 20, and facilities for: 35mm: Double-head projection, magnetic and optical; 200mm studio mag; 4 screen ratios: TV to 'scope. 16mm: Optical. All with high intensity ARC projection.

*To book, 'phone Tony Sweatman, 01-437 4355*

The fully equipped **Rostrum Room** has first class facilities, including an experienced camera operator, for Titling, Animation and Bi-Pack work.

*Booking and further details from Terry Turtle at: 01-437 4355.*

---

**Charges:** 5gns per hour 10.00-6.00 p.m., Mondays-Fridays  
At other times by arrangement.

---

## Mabel Eyles and Partners

Translators/Business Negotiators  
Shorthand Writers/Journalists for  
Official Conference Reports, etc.  
Tape Transcriptions  
Business Training (Private Shorthand  
Lessons etc.)  
Electric Typing/Duplicating  
Printing and Stationery

**72 Woodfield Drive, E. Barnet, Herts.**  
368 7711/1474

---

## LIBRAIRIE DU SPECTACLE

# contacts

FRENCH AND FOREIGN BOOKS  
AND MAGAZINES ABOUT THE  
CINEMA

CATALOGUE ON REQUEST

FOREIGN ORDERS WELCOMED

24, RUE DU COLISÉE, CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES  
PARIS (VIII<sup>e</sup>) TEL.: 256 17-71



homes are cunningly described to mirror the man. Rapper living in what 'could easily be a scene from a vintage Bette Davis movie', just a stone's throw from Hollywood Boulevard. Minnelli surrounded by 'bowls of metal fruit, copper-coloured, and sometimes flanked with razor-sharp metal leaves that, brushed against, would, one feels, leave a long thread of scarlet on a careless hand'. Hitchcock serving tea in his cottage on the Universal lot accompanied by the barking of terriers and the chiming of a grandfather clock. Perhaps Hitchcock and Lang do not say anything much new—but by now, what can there be left for them to say? All the rest are, somewhere or other, freshly informative as well as entertaining, and if this is necessarily a book for film fans only, at least it is one that no film fan worthy of the name will be able to put down.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

THE FILM AND TELEVISION AS AN ASPECT OF EUROPEAN CULTURE. By James Quinn. (A. W. Sijthoff, Leyden.)

FIT FOR THE CHASE: CARS AND THE MOVIES. By Raymond Lee. (Thomas Yoseloff, 63s.)

THE LUBITSCH TOUCH. By Herman G. Weinberg. (E. P. Dutton, New York, \$2.45.)

LE MONDE DE JERRY LEWIS. By Noël Simsolo. (Editions du Cerf, Paris, 13 F.)

NORMA JEAN: THE LIFE OF MARILYN MONROE. By Fred Lawrence Guiles. (W. H. Allen, 42s.)

RELIGION IN THE CINEMA. By Ivan Butler. (A. Zwemmer, 15s.)

SCRATCH AN ACTOR. By Sheila Graham. (W. H. Allen, 36s.)

SEVENTY YEARS OF CINEMA. By Peter Cowie. (Thomas Yoseloff, 105s.)

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Laughter in the Dark

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—In a letter in your Summer issue, Mr. David Godin complains of those members of the NFT audiences who have the temerity to laugh at the wrong films, specifically *L'Age d'Or* and Bette Davis films.

Significantly, it does not seem to be the noise of this unauthorised merriment which upsets him but the fact that these audiences do not share his somewhat pious reverence. It is, of course, infuriating to have one's sacred cows laughed at; it is difficult to play the game of culturemanship when your opponent won't stick to your set of rules.

I would suggest that *L'Age d'Or*, as well as being a great film, is also a very *funny* film and was intended to be so. It is packed with surrealist jokes, and Mr. Godin's inability to see this indicates to me that his opinion of it (like the descriptive adjectives 'savage' and 'devastating') has been uncritically 'received' from the stock NFT programme notes on the film.

I would further suggest that anyone who can sit straight-faced through the average Bette Davis vehicle is lacking in a sense of humour, to say the least.

Let us have more laughter at the NFT, not less! At least it will provide a healthy antidote to the kind of attitude exemplified by a bearded, artistic-looking gentleman whom I once overheard there. During the showing of a Laurel and Hardy short he turned to the small boy with him and solemnly admonished him. 'You mustn't laugh—it's serious.'

Yours faithfully,

London, W.1.

D. A. FORSTER

SIR,—Kevin Brownlow and David Godin were both over-sensitive in their separate defences of the silent film against the philistines of the NFT. They forgot that laughter as a reaction to entertainment is ambiguous. I admit to being one of those who laughed, perhaps too loudly, during the NFT's recent showing of *L'Age d'Or*. However I would claim that I laughed in sympathy with a brilliantly comic film, rather than at a pretentious *tour de force* from the Dark Ages (before 1950).

Mr. Godin perhaps takes Buñuel over-seriously, and maybe I treat his work too frivolously, but if we both paid our money, and appreciated the film in our diverse ways, who is there to object? Certainly not Luis Buñuel, I should think.

Yours faithfully,

Chesham Bois, Bucks.

BARRY MORRIS

SIR,—I couldn't agree more with David Godin's complaint concerning members of the NFT audience.

During the Cuban film *Cumbite* two girls had a verbal argument with each other and neither an usherette nor a manager appeared to make any enquiries. I later had to move because the chap next to me decided to give his girl friend a lecture on witchcraft.

The solution to this problem lies not with the management but with the audience themselves. If a notice was flashed on the NFT screen before each performance requesting silence and stating the management will help in authorising this, then I am sure the audience itself will take care of the culprits because the NFT has stated quite clearly that they are in full support of people who really want to be fair to the film.

If the audience decides *en masse* to laugh at the film, then there is little one can do. But I'm sure that if a request were made before a performance, it would give the audience that necessary *en masse* right to shut certain people up.

Yours faithfully,

Tufnell Park, N.7.

N. EVANS

#### Cinéastes

SIR,—To set at rest the minds of Jan Dawson and Neville March Hunnings (the latter's letter in your Summer issue), the word *cinéaste* was first used in England by the journal *Close Up* in the late 1920s, obviously borrowed from the French. I in turn used it extensively when writing *The Film Till Now* in 1929. It denoted the *avant-garde* film-makers at that time in Paris, but also included the film journalists who flocked around such cinemas as Studio 28, Studio des Ursulines and Studio Diamont. In English it was always printed in italics.

Yours faithfully,

Wendover, Bucks.

PAUL ROTH

#### FESTIVALS 69: EDINBURGH

continued from page 180

the film's young director/cameraman David Hoffman has seized the opportunity to anatomise the philosophy of 'work hard, play hard' in its characteristic American settings, the result (using actors as well as Murray's associates and friends) too often lapses into mere performance.

Another interesting comparison in the near-documentary has been provided by the Peter Fonda/Dennis Hopper *Easy Rider* (shown here as a gala, with Fonda in attendance) and Barbet Schroeder's *More*. Enough will probably be said about the former's slight virtues—surely outweighed by its confusions and portentousness—but *More* deserves closer attention than its subject might suggest. As both a personal memorial to a young friend of the director, who drifted from Paris to Ibiza, where he died of an overdose of heroin, and a close study of the corrosive effects of mounting addiction, the film is desperately understated throughout its two hours. Yet both Klaus Grunberg as the vulnerable German student and Mimsy Farmer as his hopelessly compromised initiator become authentically tragic figures. The only real miscalculation is the somewhat conventionally sinister pusher, an ex-Nazi, though even he is far from two-dimensional.

Under dedications we have had two extraordinary Dutch *hommages*: Pim de la Parra's *Obsessions* (dedicated to the memory of Republic Pictures) and Harry Kumel's *Monsieur Hawarden* (dedicated to Josef von Sternberg, no less). Neither could be termed a success, though they offer the joys of (respectively) lines like 'I nearly bought it that time' and 'Kill the story', and a character musing about a play once seen which involved a man trying to persuade a woman that he had seduced her last year in Marienbad. Not surprisingly, the real achievements among the new films shown have already been seen elsewhere: *Dillinger is Dead* more than lives up to its reputation as a chillingly elegant study of its hero's meticulous conversion of his life into art; *Le Gai Savoir* confirms that Godard is on the way to forging a language fully adequate to his perception of the new politics; while *Antonio das Mortes*—whose director, Glauber Rocha, is invoked in *Le Gai Savoir*—seems equally to be creating an excitingly new language, combining ballads with ritual mummery.

Finally, disappointments. Perhaps the most unfortunate was the much-heralded Swedish week. While Susan Sontag's



brittle *Duet for Cannibals* had its admirers (of whom I was not one), neither *Made in Sweden*, *The Corridor* nor *The White Game* could be said really to live up to their eminently serious political and moral concern. Much more, however, will need to be said about Peter Watkins' *The Gladiators*, despite its over-ambitious and schematic attempt to deal with the implications of institutionalising aggression and nationalism. But what could one say about Frankie Dymon Jr.'s sadly inept *Death may be your Santa Claus* or the ridiculous *Recess*, a Pepsi generation allegory?

IAN LESLIE CHRISTIE

## CENSORSHIP: A VIEW FROM NEW YORK

*continued from page 203*

predicted that the bikini would never cross the Atlantic. Nor the mini-skirt. But they did, and America herself topped these outrages with the topless and the see-through. And now no one, least of all the Puritans, knows where it is all to end.

This longtime moviemane can only regret that we didn't have a little less freedom a little earlier. I recall back in the Forties how a dozen actresses turned down the lead in *Voice of the Turtle* because the whole point of John Van Druten's gentle comedy would be lost on the screen without the mandatory bedroom scene. Eleanor Parker finally accepted a part that lost all of its charm by being denied the slightest suspicion of sex. Today *Voice of the Turtle* would be more likely to lose its charm by an excessive transformation of vertical grace into horizontal gaucherie.

We have come from an era when no one went to bed with anyone else to an era when people spend more time in bed than Oblomov ever did and to even less purpose. The fantasy of superhuman restraint has been replaced by the fantasy of superhuman release, and the truth has been passed about halfway on the path of the pendulum. Even the most revolutionary among us probably misses some of the charming footwork of actors and actresses as they circumvented the truth of the libido. But it must be remembered that the censors allowed us nothing when we asked for so little, and so now it is only fitting that we allow the censors nothing no matter how base the screen becomes. There can be no compromise with censorship even when there is regret for some of the lost charm of repression and innocence.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WARNER-PATHE for *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, *Bye Bye Braverman*, *The Seagull*, *Voice of the Turtle*.  
WARNER/SEVEN ARTS for *The Wild Bunch*, photograph of Sam Peckinpah.  
UNITED ARTISTS for *Baisers Volés*, *La Musica*, *Muriel*, *Midnight Cowboy*.  
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *A Severed Head*, *Easy Rider*.  
COLUMBIA PICTURES/ATHENA-LATONA for *King Lear* (Brook).  
M-G-M for *The Appointment*, 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, *Cinderella—Italian Style*.  
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *Goto*, *l'Île d'Amour*, *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad*, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, *The Ten Thousand Suns*.  
CONNOISSEUR FILMS for *Renaissance*.  
HUNTER FILM SERVICES for *Rosalie*, *Gavotte*.  
CINECENTA for *Mr. Freedom*.  
LONDON INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS/MONARCH for *Accident*.  
PLANET FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *La Voie Lactée*.  
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *La Femme Infidèle*.  
MITHRAS FILMS for *Praise Marx and Pass the Ammunition*.  
I.C.A.I.C. for *Lucia*, photographs of Santiago Alvarez, Tomas Gutierrez Aiea, Humberto Solas.  
MOSFILM for *A Nest of Gentlefolk*.  
GRIGORI KOZINTSEV/LENFILM for *King Lear*.  
SATYAJIT RAY/PRIYA FILMS for *Days and Nights in the Forest*.  
FILM POLSKI for *Dom*.  
SVENSK FILMINDUSTRI for *491*.  
GENERAL PRODUCTIONS PANAMA for *The Sweet Hunters*.  
CYTHERE FILMS for *La Fiancée du Pirate*.  
HYOGENSHA/NIPPON ART THEATRE GUILD for *Double Suicide*.

## CORRESPONDENTS

HOLLYWOOD: Axel Madsen	SCANDINAVIA: Ib Monty
ITALY: Giulio Cesare Castello	SPAIN: Francisco Aranda
FRANCE: Gilles Jacob	POLAND: Boleslaw Michalek
AUSTRALIA: Charles Higham	INDIA: Amita Malik

SOLE AGENTS for U.S.A.: Eastern News Distributors, 155 West 15th Street, New York 10011.

PRINTED BY The Whitefriars Press Ltd., London and Tonbridge, England.  
BLOCKS by Art Reproduction Co. Ltd., London.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES (4 issues) 24s. including postage.  
U.S.A.: \$4. Price per copy in United States, \$1.  
PUBLICATION DATES: 1st January, 1st April, 1st July, and 1st October.  
Overseas Editions: 12th of these months.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

DON ALLEN is a lecturer in modern languages at Maria Grey College, Twickenham. Has written on films for *Screen* (magazine of the SEFT) and is at present working on a book on François Truffaut.  
... ANDI ENGEL was born in 1942 in Berlin. He works as a freelance writer for the film department of *Der Spiegel*, is preparing a book on the serials of Feuillade, and a 16 mm. film about political film-making. In October plans to set up as a distributor in England, his first product to include all four films of Jean-Marie Straub.  
... STEPHEN FARBER is Los Angeles editor of *Film Quarterly*, and a contributor to *The Hudson Review*. He is currently working on a screenplay about young radical terrorists in America.  
... NEVILLE HUNNINGS is a comparative lawyer engaged in legal research, a film historian and author of the standard work on film censorship, *Film Censors and the Law*.  
... BESSIE LOVE began her acting career in *Intolerance*, and her 100-odd screen credits include work with Ford, Wyler, Capra, and most recently a memorable appearance as Isadora Duncan's mother in Karel Reisz's film. She has lived in England since 1935.  
... MEL MCKEE is on the faculty at Dekalb College in Clarkston, Georgia, and editor of the *Dekalb Literary Arts Journal*. Has published a number of stories and poems and is working on a science-fiction novel, *The World that Once Is*.  
... GAVIN MILLAR is a writer and director of arts documentaries for BBC Television. He also contributes regularly on arts subjects to *The Listener* and *The Financial Times*.  
... RUI NOGUEIRA is a 31-year-old journalist and film historian living in Paris. Has contributed to magazines in France, Belgium, Portugal and Britain, and is at present working on books on Nicholas Ray and Jean-Pierre Melville.  
... ANDREW SARRIS is film critic of *The Village Voice* and assistant professor of cinema at New York University. Is vice-chairman of the American National Society of Film Critics, author of *Films of Josef von Sternberg* and editor of *Interviews with Film Directors*.  
... PHILIP STRICK, a Cambridge graduate in History and English, is head of Film Distribution at the British Film Institute. Has previously been an actor, cinema manager and film publicist, and has been writing film criticism for ten years. He is currently presenting Britain's first full-scale course on science-fiction as part of London University's Extra-Mural Studies activity.  
... RICHARD WHITEHALL is film critic for the *Los Angeles Free Press*, and has written articles for *Film Quarterly*, *Texas Quarterly* and *Atlantic Monthly*.

## Binders for SIGHT AND SOUND

are now available at 15/- each  
(plus postage and packing 1/6)

Each binder holds two years' issues (eight numbers) and is strongly bound in blue Fabrilene, lettered in gold.

FROM PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT, BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE,  
81 DEAN STREET, W.1.

## SIGHT AND SOUND

### subscription rates

For one year: 24s.  
For two years: 44s.  
For three years: 63s.  
(including postage)

From: THE PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT,  
BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE, 81 DEAN STREET,  
LONDON, W.1

American readers are advised to apply to  
Eastern News Distributors Inc., 155 West 15th  
Street, New York, N.Y., 10011.



# FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars.

**ALFRED THE GREAT (M-G-M)** Extraordinary excursion into Dark Ages cinema, in which swinging young Alfred abandons the priesthood to go off and fight Michael York's team of surly, shield-banging Danes. No cakes are burned; but everything else is distinctly charred. (David Hemmings, Prunella Ransome; director, Clive Donner. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

**ASTRAGALE, L' (Columbia)** Curiously unconvincing tale of a young woman who escapes from jail only to find that all the world's a prison when you have lesbian leanings, break your ankle, fall in love with a fly-by-night (male), and go on the streets to support yourself. (Marlene Jobert, Horst Buchholz; director, Guy Casaril. Eastman Colour.)

**BEST HOUSE IN LONDON, THE (M-G-M)** Comedy about how they got the girls off the streets in Victorian London. Denis Norden's whimsical pastiche of the romantic novels of the time produces just a few verbal fireworks in among a lot of damp squibs. (David Hemmings, Joanna Pettet, George Sanders; director, Philip Saville. Eastman Colour.)

**BRIDGE AT REMAGEN, THE (United Artists)** War is madness all over again, with Germans and Americans battling to no purpose over a bridge during World War Two, while death visits both sides impartially and cynical wisecracks fly. Good performance from George Segal, fine photography by Stanley Cortez. (Ben Gazzara, Robert Vaughn; director, John Guillermin. DeLuxe Colour, Panavision.)

**\*\*\*CAPRICIOUS SUMMER (Contemporary)** Jiri Menzel's bitter-sweet period romance about a pair of circus performers and the disruptive effect they have on the lives of three middle-aged provincial notables. Elegant, gently ironic, reminiscent of Renoir in its nostalgia for the carefree summers of lost youth. (Rudolf Hrusínský, Vlastimil Brodský, Mila Mysliková. Eastman Colour.)

**\*\*CINDERELLA—ITALIAN STYLE (M-G-M)** Aggressively dubbed but otherwise pleasing Francesco Rosi fairytale, with Omar Sharif as the truculent princeling who meets Sophia Loren in the turnip field. Engaging ploys with levitating monks and picnicking witches, and a splendid sense of landscape. (Dolores Del Rio. Technicolor, Franscope.) Reviewed.

**DADDY'S GONE A-HUNTING (Warner-Pathe)** The nightmare adventures of an English girl pursued round San Francisco by a psychotic photographer who's out to murder her baby. Carol White battles gamely and glumly with a daft script, while Mark Robson pulls out every melodramatic stop in the book. (Paul Burke, Scott Hylands. Technicolor.)

**DANCE OF DEATH, THE (Paramount)** Record of the National Theatre production, with Laurence Olivier and Geraldine McEwan as Strindberg's baleful couple, locked in a flesh-tearing marriage. One of those thin-textured, TV-style compromises, capturing all the artifice of the performance and losing much of the art. (Robert Lang; director, David Giles. Technicolor.)

**\*\*\*EASY RIDER (Columbia)** Elliptical motorcycle odyssey which builds from an agreeably relaxed travelogue to an appallingly powerful allegory of America today. The beauty of the scenery is sharply contrasted with the ugliness of the people who inhabit it. (Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Jack Nicholson; director, Dennis Hopper. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

**\*EYE OF THE CAT (Rank)** Spine-chilling melodrama (or perhaps black comedy) in which an ingrown family's attempts to murder one another are foiled by the intervention of numbers of cats

with vampiric tendencies and vaguely psychic powers. Eleanor Parker emotes zestfully from a wheelchair. (Gayle Hunnicutt, Michael Sarrazin; director, David Lowell Rich. Technicolor.)

**\*\*GOODBYE, COLUMBUS (Paramount)** Absolutely faithful translation of Philip Roth's very funny novella about a young Jew's introduction to sex and wealth in the world of the *nouveaux riches*. Reminiscent of *The Graduate* in its side-long humour, but much more evenly and self-effacingly directed. (Richard Benjamin, Ali MacGraw; director, Larry Peerce. Technicolor.)

**GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY, THE (Gala)** German version of the biggest heist of them all, made three years ago and since overtaken by events. Scrupulously accurate in detail, but the dubbed dialogue is often hilarious and there are some very odd ideas about the way British crooks look and behave. (Horst Tappert, Hans Cossy; directors, John Olden, Claus Peter Witt.)

**\*\*\*HUGO AND JOSEFIN (Cinecenta)** Immensely engaging film about two children and the adventures they share during one brief summer in the Swedish countryside. Exquisite, sunny photography and a real sense of the carefree, evanescent innocence of childhood. (Marie Ohman, Fredrik Becklén, Beppe Wolgers; director, Kjell Grede. Eastman Colour.)

**\*\*INNOCENCE UNPROTECTED (Hunter)** Dusan Makavejev takes an affectionately sardonic look at the first Serbian talkie, made during the German Occupation. The original film is intercut with newsreel footage and interviews with the surviving cast and crew to provide both a camp tragic-comedy and an ironic statement about the ephemeral nature of heroism and the corrosive effects of time. (Dragoljub Aleksic. Part in Eastman Colour.)

**\*JOLSON STORY, THE (Columbia)** Reissue in 70 mm. of the old war horse, with the usual topping of heads and tails but the colour unharmed. Silly and sentimental as ever, but with a certain flourish if one happens to enjoy Jolson's songs. (Larry Parks, Evelyn Keyes, William Demarest; director, Alfred E. Green. Technicolor.)

**JUSTINE (Fox)** Brave, colourful and crisply professional attempt by Cukor to encompass the extravagant detail of the *Alexandria Quartet* without moving an inch from Hollywood. Michael York sadly miscast as Darley but Anouk Aimée, Anna Karina and Dirk Bogarde give of their best. (Robert Forster, Philippe Noiret. DeLuxe Colour, Panavision.) Reviewed.

**\*KES (United Artists)** Sub-delinquent schoolboy temporarily redeemed by discovery and training of kestrel hawk. Realistic Northern dialogue, backgrounds and performances. Younger actors particularly good. (David Bradley, Colin Welland; director, Kenneth Loach. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

**KRAKATOA—EAST OF JAVA (C.I.R.O.)** A ship of fools sets off in search of a sunken treasure of pearls in 1883 with Krakatoa on the point of eruption. The melodrama and sentimentality are just about as engulging as the tidal wave and explosions, all done in high old Hollywood style. (Maximilian Schell, Diane Baker, Brian Keith; director, Bernard Kowalski. Technicolor, Cinerama.)

**\*LAUGHTER IN THE DARK (United Artists)** Tony Richardson takes on an updated version of Nabokov's pre-war novel, transplanted through an Edward Bond screenplay from Berlin to swinging London, and spoils it by miscalculation and miscasting. The bizarre cruelty of the story, however, retains some of its original compulsion. (Nicol Williamson, Anna Karina, Jean-Claude Drouot. DeLuxe Colour.)

**LIBERTINE, THE (Cinecenta)** Dubbed dialogue and some arbitrary cuts combine to put the kiss of death on this tawdry and unimaginative saga of a young Italian widow who sets out, armed with a copy of Kraft-Ebing, to broaden her erotic horizons. (Catherine Spaak, Jean-Louis Trintignant; director, Pasquale Festa Campanile. Eastman Colour.)

**\*\*\*MEMORIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT (Contemporary)** Staggeringly sophisticated (if that doesn't sound too patronising) Cuban film, about a bourgeois dilettante failing to adjust to life on Castro's island. Strong Italianate influences as he moons introspectively about the eternal outsider. (Sergio Corrieri, Daisy Granados; director, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea.) Reviewed.

**\*\*MIDNIGHT COWBOY (United Artists)** John Schlesinger in America with an uneven, jaundiced but sporadically well-observed story about a would-be hustling cowboy in New York. Excellent performance by Dustin Hoffman as the tubercular victim of the Great Society with

whom he hitches up. (Jon Voight. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

**MONTE CARLO OR BUST! (Paramount)** Yet another trans-European frolic (by *Those Magnificent Men out of The Great Race*), with international cast of weathered comedians banging about in old cars. Takes its time in getting to the finishing line. (Tony Curtis, Terry-Thomas, Gert Fröbe; director, Ken Annakin. Technicolor, Panavision.)

**NICE GIRL LIKE ME, A (Avco Embassy)** Sickly-sweet tale about a maddening miss from the suburbs who gets herself pregnant on each of her sorties across the Channel. Tourist views of London, Paris and Venice fill out a dripping lollipop of a script. (Barbara Ferris, Harry Andrews, Gladys Cooper; director, Desmond Davis. Eastman Colour.)

**\*ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST (Paramount)** Slow on the draw spaghetti Western, about crippled railroad baron and tobacco-chewing bad man machinating against stranded widow Claudia Cardinale. Some evidence that Sergio Leone really loves his notion of the West, but a dismal amount of loitering and lingering. (Henry Fonda, Jason Robards, Charles Bronson. Technicolor, Techniscope.)

**SMASHING BIRD I USED TO KNOW, THE (Grand National)** Meretricious case history of a girl who goes wrong because she blames herself for daddy's death. Risibly pat psychology matched by sledge-hammer direction. (Madeline Hinde, Patrick Mower, Renee Asherson; director, Robert Hartford-Davis. Eastman Colour.)

**\*\*\*SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR, THE (Hunter)** Makavejev's savage but tender tale of a sensual young telephonist's tragic love affair. Situated in a sharply observed Yugoslav setting and interlarded with lectures from a sexologist and criminologist to demonstrate the unbreachable gap between empirical observation and subjective truth. (Eva Ras, Slobodan Aligrudic.)

**\*\*\*TEN THOUSAND SUNS, THE (Contemporary)** Thirty years of Hungarian history seen through the eyes of a peasant family. If that sounds daunting, see the film: a fascinating, strikingly honest dedication to the ordinary man and his struggle to survive the abuses of faceless officialdom. (Tibor Molnár, Gyöngyi Bürös, András Kozák; director, Ferenc Kósa. Agascope.) Reviewed.

**\*THAT COLD DAY IN THE PARK (Commonwealth United Entertainment)** Sinister goings-on in the rambling Victorian apartment in which possessive spinster Sandy Dennis installs the dishevelled young man she picks up in a Vancouver park. Uneven, rather thinly scripted, but not entirely unsuccessful attempt to define character through environment. (Michael Burns, Susanne Benton; director, Robert Altman. Eastman Colour.)

**THERESE AND ISABELLE (Gala)** Heavy-footed lesbian frolic, humourlessly adapted from Violette Leduc, with Essy Persson and Anna Gael cavorting in (and out of) their school uniforms in an unconvincing simulation of boarding school passion. (Director, Radley Metzger. Ultrascop.)

**THREE INTO TWO WON'T GO (Rank)** Frustrated sales executive (Rod Steiger) picks up pert blonde hitch-hiker (Judy Geeson) and finds himself taken for a ride when she installs herself in his house and severs his already frayed bonds of matrimony. Theatrical direction by Peter Hall. (Claire Bloom, Peggy Ashcroft. Technicolor.)

**\*TOUCH OF LOVE, A (British Lion)** Somewhat faltering adaptation by Margaret Drabble of her novel *The Millstone*, about a post-graduate student determined to go through with an unexpected pregnancy. Alarming unflattering view of the National Health Service. Waris Hussein's nudging direction too often betrays his television background. (Sandy Dennis, Ian McKellen, Eleanor Bron. Technicolor.)

**\*\*\*WILD BUNCH, THE (Warner-Pathe)** Sam Peckinpah's film about the last battles of a group of gunslingers, hard-bitten survivors of an older West. Violent, thoughtful and authoritative, it keeps Peckinpah out on his own among Western directors of his generation. (William Holden, Robert Ryan, Ernest Borgnine. Technicolor, Panavision 70 mm.) Reviewed.

**YOUNG BILLY YOUNG (United Artists)** Amiable if slow-moving Western from Burt Kennedy, with pleasing performances from Angie Dickinson as a large-hearted saloon-bar moll and Robert Mitchum as a fast-drawing sheriff equally determined to shoot it out with his lifelong enemy and to prevent his over-eager young deputy from getting shot in the process. (DeLuxe Colour.)



# new cinema club

To celebrate our second birthday we are making our films available to an even wider audience—by introducing five bob seats—student membership at ten and six—and a visitors' membership (one month) at five bob.

**This season we launch Oshima's THE DIARY OF A SHINJUKU THIEF**, the most talked about film at Cannes this year. This is the first film we have dared to put into our open-ended Forbidden Film Festival before it's been submitted to the British Board of Film Censors. But we are as convinced as the distributors, Contemporary Films, that Oshima's treatment of adolescent sexual torment stands no chance of a certificate, despite its stunning qualities.

\* \* \* \*

**Also new this season**—the premiere of Ed Emshwiller's first feature **IMAGE, FLESH AND VOICE**; Kenneth Anger's latest in an all Anger/Emshwiller programme; something and something else from John Lennon and Yoko Ono; the British premiere of Andy Warhol's **THE SHOPPER**; a European Underground programme compiled by Dave Curtis; and the unblinkered visions of Margaret Tait and Derek Phillips.

\* \* \* \*

**New members can catch up** with a dozen of our past successes in a four-day round-up at the Arts Theatre. Two-thirds of the seats are available at five shillings.

Repeats of films include **CHELSEA GIRLS**, **PORTRAIT OF JASON**, **AN EVENING WITH STEVE DWOSKIN**, **SLOW RUN**, **RELATIVITY**, **SCORPIO RISING**, **WAVELENGTH**, **DAVID HOLZMAN'S DIARY**, **BERKELEY BATH BROTHEL**, **ECHOES OF SILENCE**, **NEVER STRIKE A WOMAN—EVEN WITH A FLOWER**, **BARON MUNCHHAUSEN**, **THE BRIG**, **THE THEATRE OF MR. & MRS. KABAL**, **MAN IS NOT A BIRD**, **WEEKEND** and our Forbidden Film Festival presentations **THE TRIP**, **WILD ANGELS**, **TRANS-EUROPE EXPRESS**, **STRIP**, **CAROUSELLA** and **THE AROUSING**.

*Details of membership and free illustrated programme from*

**New Cinema Club, 122 Wardour Street, London W.1. 01-734 5888**



# THE ACADEMY CINEMAS

will present



## ERIC ROHMER'S MY NIGHT WITH MAUD

with

JEAN-LOUIS TRINTIGNANT : FRANCOISE FABIAN